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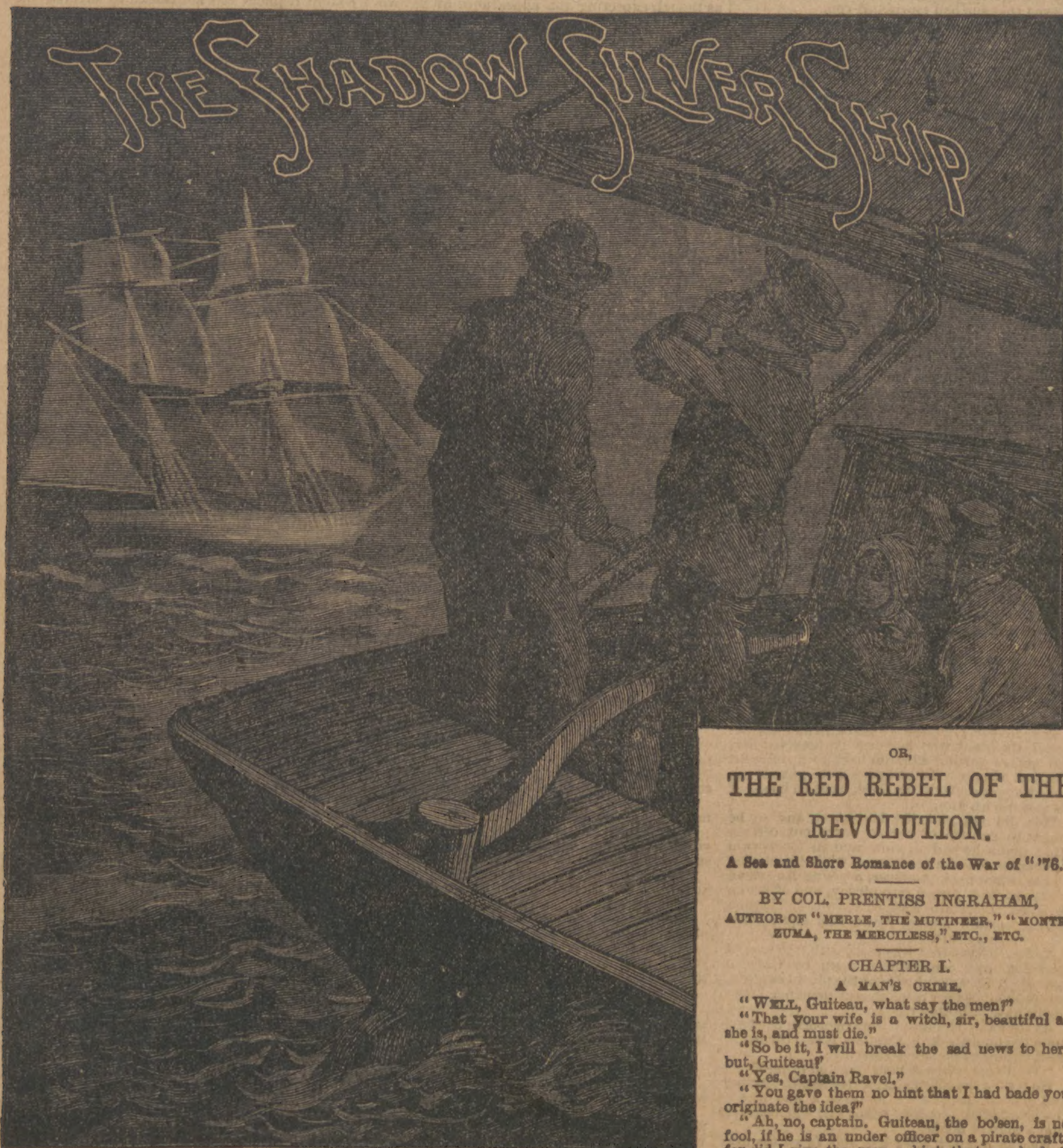
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"HO, THE SHADOW SILVER SHIP AHOY! A-H-O-Y! A-H-O-Y!"

OR, THE RED REBEL OF THE REVOLUTION.

A Sea and Shore Romance of the War of '76."

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM,
AUTHOR OF "MERLE, THE MUTINEER," "MONTE-
ZUMA, THE MERCILESS," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A MAN'S CRIME.

"WELL, Guiteau, what say the men?"
"That your wife is a witch, sir, beautiful as
she is, and must die."
"So be it, I will break the sad news to her;
but, Guiteau?"
"Yes, Captain Ravel."
"You gave them no hint that I had bade you
originate the idea?"
"Ah, no, captain. Guiteau, the bo'sen, is no
fool, if he is an under officer on a pirate craft,
for did I give the men a hint that you had of-
fered me a big price to set the men against

beautiful madam as a witch, then the lads would hang both you and me."

"True, once their superstition and malice are aroused and they are capable of anything; but how did you arrange it, good Guiteau?"

"Sh! captain, don't call me good, for I am as wicked as man can be—as wicked as you are, my captain."

"Sir?"

"Don't get angry, captain, for I was just showing you by comparison how little I deserved the word *good* applied to me."

"Once I was good, and my mother was wont to use the word to me often; but, I fell, and I do not wish to hear myself called good Guiteau."

"It was a mistake, I admit, Boatswain Guiteau, for you are as black a hearted wretch as ever sailed under the black flag."

"Witness now my act against your beautiful wife, for which you are to pay me so well; but, I bartered my soul to Satan long ago for gold, so can do no worse."

"How did you arrange it with the men, I asked," and Captain Ravel, the Rover, seemed nettled at the man's words.

"Well, sir, you know all seamen are superstitious, and we pirates doubly so, and when I hinted that we had made no captures of late, that not a single deed of good fortune had come to us since our captain had taken his beautiful wife a-cruising on the schooner, the men began to think."

"Then I told them that prayers upon a pirate ship were like curses, for they were but a cause of ill-omen to us, and I hinted that the captain's lady was always praying, and last I said I really believed that she had bewitched you."

"Then the men began to talk among themselves, and after a few days I saw that it did not require more than a suggestion by me that your wife was really a witch to have the men threaten her life, and they will come to you to-day and demand that you cast her into the sea."

"When they come I will promise to get rid of her."

"But, captain, it's hard, sir, to take her life, so let you and me save our gaily souls by casting her adrift in a boat, for the men will hardly demand more."

"And she may be picked up?"

"Hardly likely, sir, and if so what do you care, for you have gotten rid of her at last, and should you meet again, why the men forced you to do as you did is all the plea you need."

"All right, I'd rather do that, for it would ease my conscience to feel that I did not willfully take her life."

"But the men told me, sir, to break the news to you, and see, they are mustering to come aft and demand that you get rid of beautiful madam as a witch."

The two stood upon the deck of an armed craft, sailing quietly along over a southern sea.

She had that rakish, wicked look that naturally belonged to the free rovers of a century ago, and her captain and his crew were a typical lot of merciless buccaneers.

The men were rigged out gaudily in many different costumes, armed to the teeth, and counted among them whites, West Indians and negroes, the former including Americans, English, Portuguese and Spaniards.

The boatswain, Guiteau, was an Englishman, masquerading under a French name, and the chief of this lawless lot of humanity was at one time a priest, then an ex-naval officer of Great Britain, who had followed the bent of an evil nature, and disgracing his name and rank had hoisted a flag more congenial to his wicked humors.

He had won the love of a beautiful girl, the daughter of an American planter, and had wedded her, to then tear from his face the mask of hypocrisy and come out in his true colors as Ross Ravel, Buccaneer.

True to her love the young wife had not deserted the man who had cruelly deceived her, and strove hard to win him back to a different life; but after a year had passed she gave it up, and, dragged down to his level, went on board of his vessel with him.

This did not suit the buccaneer, and so he sought to get rid of her to carry out certain other plans he had in view, and in Boatswain Guiteau he found a ready tool, while he selected a time when his first officer, a young American whom he had forced into piracy, and of whom he stood in certain awe, was away in Havana getting certain needed stores and equipments for the pirate craft.

And so it was that the men, with the seed of suspicion and superstition sown by Guiteau against the beautiful wife of the pirate captain, had pronounced her a witch and demanded that she be at once gotten rid of.

As the crew advanced toward where he stood upon the quarter-deck, Captain Ravel turned to meet them and demanded sternly:

"Well men, what is your demand of me?"

He was a handsome man, dashing in bearing and dressed gorgeously, just such a one to win the heart of an innocent young girl who believed him a man of honor.

He was a good actor too, and faced the men with no shadow upon his face, and more, as though he meant to meet their demand at the

point of his cutlass and muzzle of his pistol, for while one hand rested upon the hilt of his good blade, the other played with the butt of the firearm stuck in his red silk sash.

"Did not the boatswain tell you, captain, what we had decided on?" asked the spokesman nervously.

"He said that you all attributed the ill-fortune we have had of late to my wife's presence on board and her prayers for our souls."

"Yes, sir, and we do, for we know she be a witch, sir, one to work ill-omen upon us, and you know, captain, that the only way to break a spell of witchcraft is to put the evil heart to death."

The pirate chief seemed deeply moved, and at last said, while his voice quivered with feigned emotion:

"My men, I know the powers of those possessing the bane of witchcraft, and though I love my wife most dearly, and hoped that she would bring us only good fortune, I feel that I must give her up, that I must yield to your demand, for I too have felt her evil power."

The men moved uneasily, and the chief, after a pause continued:

"But, men, I would not be the one to take her life, nor would you stain your hands with her blood, and yet she must go from us, and if you will consent that I set her adrift in the life-boat, I will do so this very night."

"Then if she be a witch let her save herself, and if not she must die, and we must have her life recorded against us."

"Do you say yes, men, to my wish?"

The men glanced uneasily toward the cabin, as though expecting the appearance of the woman they were plotting against, and then their spokesman, having read consent in the eyes of all, responded:

"We agree, sir, if she be set adrift before night comes on."

"It shall be done, and I will now go and tell her of her doom," and the cruel outlaw chief turned and descended to the cabin.

CHAPTER II.

THE BUCCANEER'S BRIDE.

ALL unconscious of the diabolical plot against her, Cleo Ravel, the unfortunate wife of a pirate, sat in the luxurious cabin of her husband's vessel, her hands idly running over the strings of a handsome harp, her solace in her hours of sadness.

Her surroundings were strange, yet beautiful, for the cabin furniture and appointments partook of a hundred piratical captures, and the best had been stripped from every prize to adorn the sea home of the buccaneer's bride.

Velvet and silken draperies, embroidered ottomans, the richest of carpets, with *bric-a-brac* from many lands were seen upon all sides.

The cabin was very large, taking up the entire breadth and some twenty-five feet of the after end of the vessel, with forward of it two large state-rooms.

And here lived the woman whose loveliness of face and form had won for her the name of "Cleo the Beautiful," a woman who had refused honorable suitors by the score to become fascinated with an adventurer, whom afterward she found out she had been warned against with truth, for she had become the bride of a pirate.

Now as she sat there humming snatches of an old ballad dear to her girlhood, her husband entered.

She saw at a glance that his face was worried, and ceasing her music she said anxiously:

"Is aught going wrong, Ravel?"

"Yes, Cleo, there is everything going wrong."

"My husband! what can you mean?"

He threw himself into an easy-chair with a groan and buried his face in his hands.

Quickly she was by his side and dropping upon her knees she asked with loving tone:

"Tell me, Ravel, what is the matter?"

"Cleo, the men have mutinied," he said almost fiercely.

"Mutinied! So bad as that?" and her face turned white with dread.

"Yes, and worse; they make a demand upon me that I cannot resist."

"Ah, Ravel! tell me all, for your looks, your words point to me," and her voice quivered with sudden anguish.

"It is of you that I must speak, Cleo, for your actions, your words have done all the harm."

"Oh, Ravel! what have I done?"

"You have talked to the men of their crimes, of prayer—yes, have prayed for them, and pretending to tell their fortunes to frighten them, you have predicted only death and disaster for them."

"Yes, Ravel."

"And now, they say that you are an evil spirit in a beautiful form masked under a lovely face."

"My God!"

"They say that you are—"

"What?" and she drew herself up proudly and faced her accuser.

"Great God, Cleo! the crew call you a witch and demand your life," cried the buccaneer captain.

The woman sprang to her feet white with terror, and stood trembling violently.

She saw at a glance all that the charge was, all that it meant.

In those days supposed witches were believed in, and the fate of those thus accused was often appalling.

She saw now that her actions, intended to turn them from their crimes, might readily be misconstrued by the wicked, superstitious fiends who composed her husband's crew.

No wonder then that she cowered in terror before him, for what meant not that fearful change to her.

She tried to speak, but not a word could she utter.

At last the man, acting his part well to deceive her as to his own feelings, said:

"Cleo, I argued with them, pleaded with them and threatened, but all to no purpose."

"I then told them to sacrifice my life, if they would first let me place you on shore in safety."

"They refused, and so I came to tell you all."

"But you can, you will protect me, Ravel?"

Her voice was firm now with hope as she uttered the words.

"Alas, Cleo, what could I do, more than to die with you?"

"I have seen your men mutiny on two separate occasions, and each time one man quelled the disturbance."

"You refer to Belmont, my lieutenant?"

"Yes."

"He did quell the mutiny, but had to kill several of the men."

"And can you not do the same, Ravel? for it will be their lives, or death to me."

"Ah, Cleo, the mutiny when quelled by Brandt Belmont was not caused by superstition, but a fight to put to death prisoners we had taken."

"Now the worst fear of man, superstitious dread, arouses these demons and they demanded that I give you up for death."

"Then I must die, Ravel?"

There was something so pathetic, so resigned in the words and tone in which they were uttered, that the guilty man felt himself smote hard, and shuddered.

Then he said:

"I will tell you, Cleo, what I did do."

"Yes, Ravel?" and she clutched eagerly at his words of hope as a drowning man would at a straw.

"I persuaded them not to put you to death."

"God bless you, Ravel."

"But, Cleo, instead, to set you adrift in an open boat."

"My God!"

"Don't feel that you are lost, Cleo, for we are near the coast of Mexico."

"I thought that we were near the middle of the Gulf."

"Oh, no, just off-shore, though the men do not know it, and I will take the life-boat and slip in some provisions and food for you, and a couple of oars, for we will not set you adrift before night, and I will come near, so as to keep you in view until I have seen the tide take you near shore."

"Then I will note the spot and come for you before long, for the coast near here is inhabited and you can readily find a place of refuge."

"If you are not pleased with this plan, Cleo, then I will defend you with my life and we can die together."

"No! no! Ravel, make me one promise?"

"Yes."

"When you come after me, promise to give up forever your life of crime, and gladly will I do as you wish."

"Yes, I promise, Cleo."

"Swear it!"

"I do!"

"Enough! go on deck and leave me alone in my prayers."

"In an hour I will be ready; but there is great risk as it is, Ravel."

"And here it is certain death."

"True, I abide by your plan, Ravel," and sinking into her seat she looked the very picture of woe, and the buccaneer fled from the cabin to shut out the form crouching in prayer from his sight.

CHAPTER III.

ADRIFT.

FOR a long while after the buccaneer left the cabin, his conscience stung with remorse, the beautiful form of Cleo was bent in prayer.

At last she arose from her knees, and though her face was deathly pale she was perfectly calm.

She had conquered her emotion and was ready to abide the result.

Then she set about her preparations for her voyage, be it to life or death, and her first act was to secrete about her person many jewels and rich trinkets which had been lavished upon her by her husband and the crew, when first she came on board the outlaw craft.

But how changed, since then, had she become in their thoughts.

Then like a star of good omen to the buccaneer craft, she had now become a feared, bated being, believed to be allied to Satan, in truth, a witch.

At last the shadows began to deepen in the

cabin and she knew that night was near at hand.

No, there was a deep, rumbling sound, and it was an approaching storm that had so soon darkened sea and skies.

Surely the crew would not send her off adrift in face of the coming tempest.

Ah, yes, for they had no pity for such as she, no heart for a witch.

A tread upon the companionway and her husband entered.

But he had not come alone, for he had feared to trust himself in her presence.

Behind him came his private officers and several men.

She had started toward him, believing him alone, as though to throw herself into his arms; but now she saw him draw back and heard his coldly-spoken words:

"Clio, the men believe that you have bewitched the ship and them, and that is why we capture no more prizes.

"They demand that you be set adrift in the face of this coming tempest, and if you are a witch, then save yourself from death, and if not then your blood must be upon our heads.

"Clio, the boat is ready for you alongside, and we have come for you. Are you ready?"

Of course he was playing a part, to still better be able to save her, and so she too must act, not show what she felt.

"I am ready for the sacrifice you doom me to," she said with forced calmness, and she tried to catch the eye of her husband.

But he would not meet her gaze, and more, held back and motioned to his lieutenant to lead her to the deck.

She shrunk back from the lieutenant, and walked alone, following her guilty husband to the deck.

The men stood there in a group, grim, stern, silent yet uneasy.

The heavens were overcast with inky clouds, and the vessel was gliding slowly along under reefed sail, driven by a light breeze, for the storm was coming, yet miles away.

On the side towed a small boat taken from a prize, and in it were a pair of oars, a small cask and a bundle.

But the boat was light and frail, it seemed, even for a quiet sea.

The men had become so overwhelmed with their superstitious fears that they shuddered as she came on deck.

Facing them she said in a firm voice, while her eyes rested in a fixed look upon the face of her pirate husband:

"Men, you call me a witch and sentence me to be turned adrift in that frail boat in the face of yonder tempest!

"Woe be unto you all, if my death follows this cruel act of yours!"

The men shrunk from her as though from a pestilential blast, but uttered no word in response to her warning, while her husband stood as though chained to the deck.

"I am ready, sirs! have some of you the courage to escort the Sea Witch to her boat?"

Her voice was becoming hard and bitter now, and her eyes had a look in them that seemed to read the guilty soul of Ravel the Rover.

But yet she did not grieve now, she uttered no complaint, for her heart seemed turned to stone with the discovery that if the crew believed her a witch her husband also was not guiltless of a like belief.

Not one of the crew stepped forward to aid her, and she walked fearlessly to the side of the schooner and went up the gangway steps to the top of the bulwarks.

There she hesitated an instant and glancing over the pirate crew until her eyes fell upon the chief, she cried in startling tones:

"Buccaneers, the Sea Witch goes to her doom, but yours will quickly follow!"

In an instant she went down the gangway and stepped into the boat towing alongside, while several seamen sprung forward and cast loose the painter.

A moment more and she was adrift upon the broad Gulf of Mexico, far from the land and with a tempest rushing down upon her with irresistible fury.

Away glided the pirate craft leaving the boat dancing in its wake, while her crew gathered in groups and gazed after her.

There on the quarterdeck stood the chief, silent, pallid and with a look of almost fright upon his handsome, cruel face.

He had accomplished his purpose and gotten rid of the woman who had become his bride, giving up all for him, pirate though he was.

But those threatening words rung wildly in his ears, seeming to yet fill the air as they had when sent from the white lips of the doomed woman.

He saw her seize her oars, and they broke in two, for he had had them cut in twain.

Then she grasped at the cask, and next the bundle.

There were but a few drinks of water in the one, only a mouthful of food in the other.

He saw that she knew that he had betrayed her, that he had been the one to wish to get rid of her, to have her die.

He beheld her shake her tiny clinched fist

after him, and he knew that she was uttering maledictions upon his head.

He knew that her love had turned to hatred of the fiercest kind.

Yet he could not turn his gaze from her, and he watched her in the gathering darkness of the coming storm and night.

At last he could stand it no more and he rushed down into his cabin to shut out the terrible sight, for now he realized how dearly he had really loved the woman he had sentenced to death.

Yet he dared not call upon the men to go back and pick her up, for they did believe her a witch, and did he give such an order they would at once turn upon him he well knew.

At length the roaring without told him that the storm was almost upon them, and he rushed upon deck, glad, in a struggle with the tempest to drive away his bitter thoughts.

His first glance was at the storm, and then astern.

The storm was coming on in fury, driving a huge wall of foam before it, and the little boat was in its path, the woman standing like a statue facing the tempest and as though in defiance of its power to harm her.

Another moment and the skiff was no longer in sight, and the pirate craft was battling with the storm.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SILVER SHIP.

UPON the coast of Mexico one calm morning, several days after the cruel desertion of Clio by her pirate husband, a small boat drifted ashore and was caught by some Mexican fishermen whose hamlet was near.

The boat had proven after all to be staunch enough to resist wind and wave, and it had thus preserved the life of its single occupant who in that short while had seemed to grow from youth to age, for her eyes were sunken, her cheeks hollow and her wealth of black hair had become white as snow in the ordeal through which she had passed.

Unable to speak, nearer dead than alive, she was taken by the kind fishermen, who recognized her as not one of their class, to the hacienda of a rich Mexican ranchero, who with his family dwelt not far distant.

Back to health she was nursed, and then as she was homeless and friendless, she was offered the place of governess in the family, and thus dwelling among kind strangers in a strange land her life was passed until years had gone by.

The ranchero was also a wealthy miner, and he had orders to collect for the Government of Spain a large amount of silver bullion from the miners in Mexico, and, with other treasure demanded from the people by Spain, to take all by a barque to Cadiz.

The ranchero obeyed his orders so far as getting a swift-sailing vessel, loading her with silver bullion and other treasure, and setting sail was concerned; but he never reached Cadiz.

To enjoy the voyage he carried his family with him, and of course the beautiful white-haired governess, old before her time, and to whom they had all become deeply attached.

She had told a simple story, of how her husband had been commander of a vessel and she had escaped wreck in the little boat in which she had come ashore.

No one doubted her and all were glad to have her remain, as she had said that she had no kindred or friends to whom she could go.

And the fleet barque set sail, under a gallant old skipper with a small crew, for the sailing of so valuable a cargo was kept secret as possible, and it was hoped that no enemy had learned of the duty she was sent upon.

But the secret had leaked out, and both sea outlaws and war vessels whose nation was the enemy of Spain, lay in wait out in the Gulf for the Silver Ship.

Sighted by a cruiser a chase began at once, and though a storm blew the pursuer and pursued far off the course, they did not lose sight of each other by day or night.

Then, to make matters worse for the barque, fever broke out among the crew, and quickly spread to the cabin, when the ranchero was the first to go.

Then his wife followed and his daughter next, and though she had devoted her every energy to nursing them the beautiful governess escaped the epidemic, but was alone left of the once happy family from the Mexican hacienda.

At last the persistent pursuer was thrown off by the barque, which had fled far off her course, and through the fever had become short handed, with hardly men enough to work the ship.

The next morning another pursuer hove in sight, and another, and a hot chase began, and was continued for days.

Within range they fired steadily upon the flying barque, but as long as the shot struck no vital part of his vessel the undaunted skipper held on.

His taffrail and bulwarks were cut almost to pieces, the spars had big gashes in them, the sails were filled with shot-holes, while the crew, by death and wounds, remained but a handful.

They could only let the barque keep on her

course before the wind, her best sailing point, and even when it came on to blow a gale not a stitch of canvas could be taken in.

And yet in her wake hung her relentless pursuer, for the other had been dropped out of sight astern.

At last the hull of the vessel became almost a wreck, and yet the daring old Spanish skipper stood at his wheel, determined to hold on until he too fell.

And this came later on, and the snow-haired woman, who had been called by the pirate crew a Sea Witch, remained unharmed, calm and seemingly without fear.

As night came on she seemed to feel that the end of the gallant barque was near.

The pursuer was gaining then, but a black-looking tempest was also sweeping down upon the devoted craft.

Soon they came, and together, the darkness, the storm and the pursuer, all in one mad rush it seemed.

The masts, cut and shattered, went overboard as the storm struck the barque, her decks were swept clean of the crew who still remained, and the hull drove away in the blackness, a wreck upon the sea, while the crew of the cruiser had to look to their own safety and give up the Silver Ship.

Days passed away but the wreck of the Silver Ship still floated, and of all that had been on board but one remained alive, and that was the woman, the Sea Witch.

Other, were there, the old skipper and others of the crew, but they were dead, and the wreck was at the mercy of the winds and waves.

Then one day a sail appeared in sight, and the woman gave a cry of joy.

But that cry of joy soon after became a wail of woe, as her vision told her that the vessel was but too well known to her.

"My God have mercy! after all I have passed through is it to be my fate to again fall into the hands of that cruel man whom once I idolized but now hate with the hatred of a fiend?"

"Yes, it is his vessel, for I know her very outline of hull, spars, and sails, and my fate will be a fearful one indeed.

"Ah! can I not hide from them, for far better be it to be left here on this wreck, after they have robbed it of its treasure, than to be in their merciless power."

So saying she sped away from the deck to the cabin, and sought a hiding-place in a large chest, without thinking that its contents of velvets, laces, silks and other articles of value would cause the buccaneers to prize it highly.

But so it was, and too late she realized her mistake as she heard the command to carry the chest to the cabin of the pirate craft.

She shuddered as she felt it borne away, and then, as the bearers left it in the chief's cabin and departed, she sprung out of her hiding-place and darted into what she knew was the chief's storeroom of his treasures.

There was ample hiding-room there, and she knew that she could subsist for days with what she could pilfer from the cabin table when no one was there.

Once the vessel sought an anchorage and she could make her escape she was sure.

And from her concealment she heard the pirate lieutenant tell the captain of a secure hiding-place for the treasure, on an island in the Caribbean Sea where once he had been wrecked.

And she learned that the pirate craft was not seaworthy, so would sail at once for the island and then go in search of another vessel to bear away the treasure.

And from her hiding-place the unfortunate woman heard the anchor let fall off the island, and then the bullion and other treasure was removed.

She heard the men talking of an aged priest found there, and that he was to bury the treasure with certain rites that would bring eternal curses upon any one who would return alone for the riches and thus defraud his comrades.

When all the crew had gone ashore to join in these rites she slipped from her hiding-place, and with what things she cared to take from the cabin, lowered herself from the stern ports and swam shoreward, for she was a tireless swimmer.

She had discovered that her husband, Ross Ravel was no longer chief, but in his stead Brandt Belmont, the buccaneer lieutenant who was away from the schooner when she was set adrift several years before.

Still she dared not make her presence known, and yet felt that she could find a refuge upon the island with the aged priest.

She reached the shore, gained a cliff and from it looked down upon the weird ceremony going on over the treasure, which was being sunk in a pool out of sight.

The first words uttered by the priest and she started, dropped on her knees and with clasped hands listened to every sound that came from his lips.

Then she said in a voice that was hoarse with suppressed emotion:

"Ah, yes, his white hair and beard are false, and his priestly garb clothes a black heart; but he cannot deceive me

"No, no, they do not know him, but I do, and would recognize him under any disguise."

"But why is he here, masquerading as an old priest before his men?"

"Some strange change has come, and Ross Ravel no longer is the buccaneer chief."

"Yes, and I remain here with him, for revenge is sweet to me now."

A loud "Amen" from the rocks above startled the priest and pirates alike, and as the latter returned to their vessel they were followed by mocking words and laughter from the woman's lips which struck terror to their hearts, but not more dread was felt by one of them than that which came upon the one in priestly garb, who fled to his cabin like a haunted man.

CHAPTER V.

A WIZARD AND A WITCH.

"RAVEL, tell me again all that happened after you—or I left the vessel."

The one who asked the question was the one-time lovely woman who had won the name of Clio the Beautiful.

Still beautiful she was, but with her snow-white hair, large black eyes, and long snowy eyelashes and eyebrows, her beauty was of a weird kind that would create awe in the beholder rather than admiration.

Her form was still faultless, her face darkly bronzed, and her dress of velvet and silk of gorgeous colors, while her arms, wrists, neck and fingers were simply covered with jewels.

The one she addressed was Ross Ravel, the one-time pirate priest who had set the woman adrift in the little boat at sea under pretense that she was a witch.

When he had seen the pirate vessel coming he had donned a white wig and beard, dressed in the garb of a priest, with an appalling mixture of the wizard added, which had filled the buccaneers with a superstitious dread of him, and certainly prevented all possibility of recognition by them.

Now he was only dressed in a sailor suit, his own hair and beard, worn long, were dark, and his face was the same handsome, cruel one of years before.

The two were seated upon a cliff overlooking the sea in all directions, and inland giving a view of a fertile basin, for it was hardly a valley.

The island was a large one, seemingly from the sea a solid rock, with no anchorage near, and surrounded by reefs and sunken rocks.

But within was the fertile vale, with grass and trees, a deep, crystal pool, sending a tiny rivulet to the ocean, and goats were seen feeding near the stream.

In one end of the basin stood against the rocks a small chapel with its cross, and it had evidently been built from the wreckage of vessels cast upon the island to their doom.

Than these two no other person was visible upon the island, and it did indeed seem like witchcraft that they had again met, and under such weird circumstances.

"You seem strangely interested in my story, Clio."

"There, you will call me Clio, when you know I am now Selah the Sea Witch, and I always call you Father Felix, you know."

"Yes; but I have told you my story over and over again."

"True, and I like to hear it, for it tells me that I misjudged you."

"When I remained on this island it was to make you feel my revenge; but when you tell me that you did not wrong me, then am I happy indeed, and I like to hear it again and again."

"Well, I'll tell you again that the boat was a life-boat, though none of the crew knew it, and if you found the cask empty and the bundle with no food in it, then one of those fiends had taken all out."

"No, I meant you to be saved, and I headed the vessel away in the storm to be near you when I came about."

"Several of the crew were in my plot, and they were on deck that night, and yet we could not find you and I gave you up for lost."

"When we went to the rendezvous and that accursed fellow Belmont rejoined us, he heard all, and so he raised a mutiny, took my vessel from me, and in punishment, he said, for my sending you adrift in an open boat, he did the same by me."

"He sailed away in my vessel leaving me adrift in an open boat upon the waters."

"Then you know just how I, a poor woman, suffered."

"Ah, yes, I felt all; but after days of drifting my boat touched this island and I was saved."

"I found that a missionary ship had been here before me, a chapel built and plenty of stores left on hand to make me comfortable, and so I lived here, and determined if any one visited the island, to play the part of a hermit priest."

"To my horror, after a long stay here, I discovered in a vessel heading for the island, my own pirate craft."

"I hastily disguised myself, and met Belmont, the usurper captain and his men."

"None knew me, and so I pretended to be an aged priest, tottering to the grave, and so they

were content to have me bury their treasure with certain rites, until they could return for it."

"I felt that some of them would return, so I made the curses to fall upon such as fearful as I could, for I saw for myself riches untold if I could only get them from the island."

"The crew left, as you know, in fear and trembling, and your strange coming here helped out in the awe they felt, and, as you know, alarmed me also, for from playing the part of a wizard priest I seemed to have brought before me a veritable witch of the sea."

"You know the rest, so why say more, for we are united again and the future is before us."

"Yes, but the treasure?"

"That must be ours when we can get it away from the island."

"We can sail in your boat, hidden in the rocky cavern, and return with a vessel to carry off the treasure, and in a far-away land kings will not live more luxuriously than we."

"Yes; but let us abide our time yet longer, for in spite of my curses to fall upon the one who would come here to rob his mates, some of that crew will come back, unless all went down in the craft that night, which you say was so unseaworthy."

"Yes, they were working the pumps day and night, and the hull had come to be but a shell."

"She may have gone down, and yet she may not; but certain it is that Belmont or some of the crew will come here for the treasure."

"And then?"

"Then we must simply not let them have it."

"But how can it be prevented?"

"I am sure, if they come, only a few, from three to five, will comprise the party, for they wish to make the amount for each as large as possible, and there are hardly more than that number, even in that dare-devil crew, who would brave that dread curse."

"Then we must pretend to receive them well and get rid of the leaders, for I can do it, while the others must be forced under the spell of witchcraft and thus we will command them body and soul."

"And then?"

"We can take their vessel, which will doubtless be a small one, load it with the treasure and sail for Havana."

"Once in that city we need fear nothing from those who go with us, for dead men tell no tales, and we will be rich beyond all our thoughts of riches."

"So be it! the die is cast between us, and I accept what the end may be."

"And I," and for a moment no word was spoken between the two; but had either regarded the face of the other they would have read there a look sinister, deceitful and full of deviltry, for both the man and the woman were boldly playing a part, and a dangerous, daring part it was.

And each trusted the other, for the man saw not the revenge in the depths of the woman's heart, and she saw not that his plans for the future did not include her after she had ceased to be useful to him.

"Sail ho!" suddenly called out the man in the professional tones of a seaman, and his gaze was fixed upon a white speck visible far away off on the blue horizon.

The woman's eyes also beheld the tiny white speck, and together they watched it until it rose into the proportions of a handsome vessel.

"It is a brig, and she sails like the wind, to rise as rapidly as she has above the horizon," said the wizard.

"Yes, and she is armed," the woman answered.

"She is, and her decks are crowded with men—my God! it must be Belmont, returned in a new vessel, so our treasure is lost to us."

"Perhaps, and yet it may not be."

"Wait and see."

"The brig is heading straight for the island."

"True, but will not be able to land to-day or to-night, in the face of yonder rising storm," and the woman pointed to clouds that denoted a coming tempest.

"Well, she will run in close and then stand away after landing a boat's crew perhaps! but if she does not land, then the treasure must be placed this night where they cannot find it—ah! too late, for they will have time to land a boat's crew before the storm."

"Quick! you must not be seen but stand ready to help me in my work of witchcraft, and I will venture to put on my garb of the Wizard Priest," and the two plotters hastened down into the vale and disappeared in the little chapel, the rear of which led into caverns in the cliffs where they dwelt.

CHAPTER VI.

UNDER A SPELL.

THE vessel sighted by the two strange beings upon the island cliff was a large brig, and at her peak floated the flag of Great Britain.

She had, as the Wizard Priest had said, come on like the wind, after her topsails had been seen rising above the horizon.

A more beautiful craft had never floated even a black flag, which was generally flaunted above

the decks of the trimmest and most rakish of sea cruisers.

From the tip of her exceedingly long and pencil-like bowsprit, to her taffrail, from waterline to trucks she was a model of symmetry, grace and beauty.

Her hull was lean forward, with a swell amidships and gaunt as a deer-hound aft, which rendered her both speedy and stanch.

Upon her sharp iron prow, keen as a sword-blade, and under the bowsprit, was a strange figurehead.

It was that of a woman with dark flowing hair and bronzed skin, and a dress of red, a face and figure made to represent a witch.

In her right hand she held a real sword, pointing ahead, and in her left, the mouthpiece pressed to her lips, a trumpet from which she was supposed to be blowing a gale of wind over the sea.

The feet of this beautiful carved piece of work rested upon a human skull, as though in defiance of death, and thus the figurehead told her name of "The Wind Witch."

The brig was armed with a fine battery, and her crew were neatly dressed in the garb of the royal navy of Great Britain.

Upon her quarter-deck stood several officers, all in the royal uniform except one, and he wore the gorgeous attire of a cavalier.

"In the face of this rising storm, Captain Maybrick, it would be madness to anchor near the island, sir, so it will be well to stand off for plenty of sea room," said the man in cavalier costume, and who was a man of particularly fine physique and handsome face, bronzed to the hue, however, of a sailor who had long buffeted with the winds and waves.

"I am so anxious to begin work, Captain Belmont, that I think it would be well to have you go ashore in a boat, with, say, a dozen men, to get the treasure together, while I stand off with the brig until this storm blows over, for it looks like ugly weather for several days to me."

"It does, sir, and it might be best as you say for me to land with a boat's crew and begin work," responded the man addressed as Captain Belmont.

"Very well, get ready and I'll order a boat lowered and ready, and stand in as near as you deem it safe."

Half an hour after a cutter containing eight oarsmen, a coxswain, and Captain Belmont in the stern sheets was rowing toward the island, while the brig was running away with all speed to give herself plenty of sea room in which to meet the threatening storm.

The one in cavalier dress took the tiller-ropes as the cutter neared the island, and seemingly well acquainted with the waters avoided many a sunken rock which would have dashed the boat to pieces to have struck.

Reaching a shelf of rock jutting from the island cliffs, the boat's party sprung ashore, and, directed by Captain Belmont, dragged the cutter far up beyond the reach of the sea and made it fast there.

Some packages were then taken from the boat, and the crew, all armed, followed Captain Belmont up the steep cliff path to the summit of the rocky wall, when a murmur of admiration came from the men as they beheld the secluded and lovely vale below.

"Come, men, we must not halt here, for the storm is almost upon us, and we'll seek shelter of the priest who dwells in yonder little chapel," and Captain Belmont pointed with his cutlass to the tiny chapel.

They quickly followed their leader down the steep path and crossing the vale soon halted at the door of the chapel.

Just as Captain Belmont knocked with the hilt of his cutlass, there came a blinding flash of lightning, followed by a crash of thunder that shook the island, for the storm was bursting now upon the sea not far distant.

But, though the men were startled by the vivid glare and the thunder, they were more so by hearing in a deep voice from within the solemnly uttered words:

"He who knocks for entrance into this sacred tabernacle, is perjured before God and man, for he has come hither to rob his comrades in crime of their riches."

"It is you, Captain Brandt Belmont, the pirate, for it is given unto me to see thy now accursed face."

"Thy now accursed face."

The last four words came like an echo from the cliffs, or from the air, and yet in a shrill, strange voice, unlike the deep voice that had spoken from within the chapel door.

At the words, and the echo, Belmont, who had seemed uneasy, and whose face was very pale, shrunk back like one struck a hard blow, while the crew gazed in terror about them and upon their leader.

But Belmont recovered himself quickly and said harshly, and in tones meant to be defiant:

"So be it that I am Belmont the Buccaneer, Sir Wizard Priest, and that I come for my treasure hidden here under thy awful curse; thy black art should tell thee that I alone survive of all my crew, and hence am sole heir to the riches left here under thy ban."

From his rock lookout in the cliff the Wizard had seen that the brig, as she came near, carried the British flag, and his glass showed him that her officers and crew were certainly not pirates, so he made some shrewd guesses as to the exact reason of the cruiser's coming, and, with her, his old lieutenant, Belmont.

He therefore said, in response to the outlaw officer's hint, that his "black art" should have told him that he alone survived his crew:

"The storm is upon us, so step within the portals of this sacred hut, you and your English crew, and let me tell you that I do know that thy vessel met with reverses, but thou art not the sole survivor, Brandt Belmont."

"Hail how know you this, old Gray Beard?" quickly asked the pirate officer.

"By my art."

"No! Fornesca and his crew have been here already; but if they are before me and have that treasure, I will strangle thee, priest, wizard or devil that thou art!" and the pirate officer stepped nearer to the Wizard, as though to carry out his threat, when a voice, from whence none knew, uttered the words, solemnly spoken:

"Thou shalt do no murder!"

Belmont shrunk back as though confronted by a ghost, and glanced uneasily around him; his men became very nervous at their surroundings, while the wild raging of the storm without more deeply impressed them.

"I have no fear of thee, Belmont the Buccaneer, though thy hands be red with blood."

"No; Fornesca has not been here, but said I not that thou wert not the sole survivor of thy crew?"

"I beheld thy lieutenant and his men safe as thou art, and they also will come for their share of booty, and then will be the time to take it from its hiding-place and enrich ye all."

"But tell me now thy story, and mark me well, when thou speakest falsely, that moment will my art make it known to me."

"I would know from thy own lips, Belmont the Buccaneer, thy story, and why thou hast come here claiming to be the sole survivor of thy crew, come to claim uncounted riches, come with British seamen at your back?"

"Speak, Belmont, for I would hear thy tale, and remember that thou art known to me in heart, as I read thy face now."

The outlaw officer shuddered, and turned his eyes anxiously upon his men, as though to see if they would uphold him in any act of violence he might attempt.

But he saw that they were impressed by the white hair, beard and priestly garb of the man, and awed by his supposed powers in the black art, and so he decided to temporize and then be governed by circumstances as to his future course.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WIZARD'S THREAT.

"YOU would hear my story, holy father, wouldst thou, and yet you say thou wilt know if I should tell thee falsely!" said the pirate.

"Yes, I will know."

"Yes, *we will know!*" came from the strange voice, and it again startled Belmont and the English tars.

"If you know, why need I tell thee my story?" persisted Belmont.

"That I may see just how far thou wilt tell the truth, Belmont, the Buccaneer."

"So be it, father; thou shalt hear all I have to tell."

"You recall when last I was here?"

"With thy pirate ship and crew, after thou hadst found the wreck of a Silver Ship."

"Thy vessel was unseaworthy, you feared she would sink in the next gale, and Fornesca, thy lieutenant, led thee here to bury thy treasure, that thou mightest return later in a stanch craft, and get thy riches."

"I hid those riches from mortal sight, with certain rites of church and witchcraft, and upon the one of thy crew, or thyself, who would come along to rob his mates, placed an everlasting curse."

"Then your vessel sailed away before a fierce gale, and now thou art here again; but tell me what has happened from the time thou left this isle and now return."

"I await your story, my son."

The outlaw officer had stood motionless and silent while the Wizard Priest uttered his resume of what he knew of the pirates' last visit to the island; but the English tars were certainly uneasy under his deep voice and piercing look.

"There is little to tell, father, more than that, as I knew, my craft was so unseaworthy that she went down in a gale some time after leaving this isle, forcing us to take to our boats."

"One boat with its crew was dragged down with the vessel, but the other two, Fornesca's and mine, kept afloat, but became separated, and as a storm soon after swept the seas, I supposed that he and his men were lost—were they?"

"I said that I saw Fornesca and his men escape death."

"Very well, granted, it would make longer division of the riches, did I not intend to leave

them out when I divide, so I care not whether he be alive or dead."

"As for my boat, we were picked up by a British cruiser, recognized by an officer on board, who had once been Ravel's prisoner, and so our story of being honest shipwrecked mariners was known to be false and we were put in irons and taken to London."

"Our trial of course was a mockery, but it ended in our being found guilty and sentenced to death."

"I am young, holy father, fond of life and cared not to die, so I begged an audience with the king and offered to give him vast riches in return for my life and pardon."

"I convinced the king that I meant what I said, so I was given the chance to prove my words, while my boat's crew died at the end of a rope before I left England."

"The king had just had built a fleet yacht for himself, and superbly armed and equipped, so he put a favorite officer in command, sent me aboard in irons, and the craft sailed for this island and was known as the Silver Ship."

"I was to get the treasure, and when on board the brig Wind Witch, I was to receive my pardon and become the captain's guest to whatever port I desired to disembark, and also to have a snug sum to support me."

"The captain, a gallant fellow, made me his guest in anticipation, convinced that I would not play him false, and hence you see me here now dressed as a cavalier, having landed with those good lads, to get the treasure ready to ship on the brig's return, for we feared several days of bad weather which would keep her well off at sea, for, as you know, holy father, these are dangerous waters."

"Now you have my story, and I await your comments."

Belmont had spoken in an offhand, free and easy manner natural to him, and the Wizard was sure that he had told the truth.

But he said:

"I have heard your story; but was the boat of Fornesca as stanch as yours, was it as well provided for a fight of days with the sea?"

"By the king's crown, holy father, I do believe indeed that thou art a wizard—yes, you must surely be, after all I saw and heard when I was here before, and also then called me by name."

"Your words indicate that the boat of the Senor Fornesca was not then what yours was?"

"True, mine was the life-boat, his the long-boat, and I had picked men with me, with water, provisions, sails and oars."

"And he?"

"If he found fresh water in his casks and food in the lockers it was contrary to my orders, for Fornesca was a vile wretch, the boon companion of those in the boat with him, his fellows in the most dastardly crimes, crimes which I would shrink from."

"So, holy father, if the long-boat with Fornesca and his men reached port in safety, then it was nothing short of a miracle that caused them to do so."

"Might they not have been picked up as you were?"

"True, that might have been, and as your art tells you they are safe, it must have been the case."

"Come, Sir Wizard, now tell me if you intend to refuse to allow me my treasure?"

There was a threatening look in the eyes of Belmont as he asked the question.

But the Wizard Priest replied in a low, distinct tone:

"Belmont, not one *peso* of that treasure do you touch until Fornesca and his men are known to be dead."

"When the king's brig returns here I shall tell her captain that if he dares lay finger upon that treasure to remove it from this island, then will I use my art in all its terrors to make his vessel a harmless cruiser."

"He shall be under a spell, his vessel and his crew, and no hail of other craft shall they answer, no port shall they enter, no gun shall they fire at a foe that crosses their path upon the seas."

"Havenless shall she wander the broad blue waters, from sea to sea, and though with an armed deck beneath their feet, and trained men in war, they shall fly like cowards from a craft that flies a peaceful merchant flag."

"I swear to you, Belmont the Buccaneer, that my curse, my anathemas shall ring in the ears of every man on yonder craft, and she shall be haunted for in vain as she flies the seas like a shadow of a ship, a specter, not daring to enter a harborage, not daring to answer a hail, but flying the seas indeed like a wind witch."

"I defy you, I dare you now, Belmont the Buccaneer, to rob this island of its treasure, you and your king's captain and his crew."

"Defy me if you dare, and see what the vengeance of the Wizard Priest will be."

"Yes, see what the vengeance of the Wizard Priest will be," echoed the voice in the air in startling tones.

In spite of his wonderful nerve Belmont the Buccaneer was cowed before the man he had defied, while his men with cries of terror fled from the chapel, and he followed them.

Once outside and they saw that the storm had

swept by, and reaching the cliff they beheld the brig coming rapidly back toward the island, under a full pressure of sail.

"If Captain Maybrick dare defy that wizard, I dare, and the treasure will be ours," said Belmont savagely, his nerve once more under control.

"Oh, sir! but that fearful oath, that threat! To be a havenless cruiser, never entering port, never hailing or answering a hail, flying from every craft we meet, to be but a *Shadow Ship*—My God! Captain Maybrick will not dare to defy that man of the black art, sir; no, never!" said the coxswain, in impassioned words.

"No, never!" echoed the men, their faces blanched with dread.

"But Captain Maybrick will dare do as I do," was the determined answer of Belmont, as he led the way to his boat to go out and pilot the captain to the island to face the Wizard's threat.

CHAPTER VIII.

UNDER A CLOUD.

As Belmont the Buccaneer had told the Wizard Priest, the British king had been tempted into promising him his life and a pardon, by the belief that the rover would give over to his royal treasury the vast treasure hidden in the rock island in the Caribbean Sea.

There had been that in the bearing and words of the buccaneer which convinced the king that Belmont was making no idle promises.

So he could afford to give him the chance for life, while he, the king, took the chance for enriching himself, especially as his new yacht was just about completed, and if the pirate captain failed to make good his promise there was the yard-arm of the brig to hang him up to, thus carrying out the original sentence.

The brig was found to have been most properly named the Wind Witch, for she distanced all vessels that tried their speed with her, while, though splendidly armed and manned, the orders of her captain were to run on all occasions and risk no battle unless absolutely necessary.

The truth was, with the wars upon his hands with his neighbors, and his American Colonies in revolt, the king's treasury was at a low ebb, and he needed money sadly, so why not a pirate treasure, the value of which was said to be enormous.

Sir St. George Maybrick, selected as the commander of the brig, was a particular favorite with his Majesty, and was a fine sailor as well, one who could be intrusted with any service to perform.

He was a man of means, had been reared in the royal navy, from a middy of ten years, came of an old family, and held influence at court.

The secret leaked out, however, that the king had granted promise of pardon to the Buccaneer Belmont, in return for his treasure, and that the Wind Witch was to go on the voyage to bring back the gold.

State secrets even will leak out, and so when the beautiful brig sailed, all anxiously began to count the time until she was due in port.

As orders were given Captain Maybrick to touch at Boston on the way home, bringing dispatches and paying certain money into the cramped exchequer of the Colonies, the king anxiously awaited news by each incoming vessel of the arrival in an American port of the Wind Witch.

But days passed and no word of the brig's arrival at Boston came, but instead vessels coming into English ports reported a "specter ship" afloat.

Too many superstitious people faithfully believed at that day in phantom craft at sea, as thoroughly as they did ghosts ashore, to doubt the stories brought in by mariners of this weird vessel seen in American waters.

There were many who scouted at the idea also, but the incoming ships brought too many stories about this wonderful phantom ship, and from reliable sources too, to permit longer doubt that such a craft was afloat, to all intents and purposes, as far as appearances went, the "very ghost of a brig," be she in reality what she might.

Then came news that proved the weird sailer of the seas to be none other than the Wind Witch, or her ghost.

The king was startled, anxious and angry.

Had his trusted captain, Sir St. George Maybrick failed in his pledge of honor to his king, and become a lawless rover himself?

Such was the idea suggested to his Majesty by the rivals at court of the young naval captain.

Then those friendly to Maybrick suggested that if he had gotten the treasure there would be no need for him to turn pirate.

Upon this the king concluded that the buccaneer was the traitor, that he had gotten possession of the vessel in some way, murdered Sir George, and those of his officers and crew who would not join him in his lawless course, and had hoisted the black flag over the brig.

This seemed to be the most reasonable way of regarding the mysterious affair, until when all the skippers who had seen the phantom ship at sea were brought before the king, as vessel after vessel came in, it was discovered that the brig

was the *fac-simile* of the Wind Witch, but showed no national colors, but instead at the peak floated a flag with a blue field and the reproduction of the vessel's figurehead of the Wind Witch standing upon a human skull.

This convinced all that the brig was surely the Wind Witch, for she had gone to sea from London flying that flag from her mizzen top.

The only difference in the real brig and the phantom, was that this mysterious craft was not painted black, but white, even her spars being of the same snowy whiteness as hull and sails.

That she had not developed into a pirate there was proof of in the fact that she ran from every vessel she came near, even from merchantmen. Never hailed, if suddenly in fog, or darkness, coming upon a craft, and never returned the fire of any cruiser that had met her upon the seas.

She would hover about a vessel for awhile, always afar off, and then sail away, but always without a hail, a signal or a return shot, if fired upon.

Her crew were seen to go to their work, and sail would be set, or taken in, as the wind required, and with an alacrity and skill which made old tars shake their heads ominously, and swear that the brig was a specter, and her crew but ghosts.

Thus it was that the king could no longer doubt, and yet what had his Silver Ship become.

The interest awakened by the mysterious craft was in everybody's mind, and soon the common topic of the people, when they met, was the mystery of the "Shadow Silver Ship," as the Wind Witch became popularly known, since all had become convinced that the "shadow craft" seen by so many mariners, was none other than the beautiful vessel sent by the king after the pirate treasure.

Nor was this awe about the Shadow Silver Ship alone felt upon the English shores, for it was even greater upon the American Coast, and from Halifax to the Gulf of Mexico few there were in the Atlantic ports who had not heard of this weird mystery of the sea, and the boldest seaman cared not to cross the path of this ocean specter, though it fled from every craft that carried sail, it was asserted.

The war of the Revolution had begun in America, and Boston Harbor and its surroundings had become the central theater of action.

Several battles of importance had been fought by the Colonists against the British, and General Washington had besieged Lord Howe and his forces in Boston, so that the Americans had struck a hard blow for liberty from royal rule, and the tocsin of war was echoing from Massachusetts to the Carolinas.

To aid the gallant heroes fight the battles upon land, there were brave American sailors afloat, in what vessels they could secure, to harass English commerce, and fight British cruisers when they met them on the high seas.

One day there sailed into Boston Harbor, some half a year after the real breaking out of the war, a brig flying our flag at half-mast.

It was a craft that already had a history, for once it had been a famous pirate schooner, and captured by a young American, had been bought by the British, changed into a brig, and sent to cruise in South American waters.

Now she returned to port, the British flag at half-mast, in token of distress on board, her crew reduced to a dozen men for duty, while her commander wore the dress of a common sailor, and had been released from irons as a prisoner, to bring the vessel home.

And so under a cloud, as it were, the British brig-of-war *Shark*, sailed into Boston Bay, and dropped anchor, while old sailors who gazed upon her storm-beaten and shot-scarred hull and rigging, and her general air of misfortune, shook their heads ominously, as though they knew that a still deeper pall of gloom was to fall upon the ill-omened craft.

CHAPTER IX.

UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE YARD-ARM.

A MAN was under trial for his life, facing his accusers.

A young man, with a face that even his worst foe could not find a trace of crime upon; a face to admire, respect and to command, was before a tribunal of British officers, to be tried upon charges which, if proven, would send him to the yard-arm to die an ignominious death.

The prisoner was the one in sailor garb, who had been acting captain of the British brig-of-war, which had come into port with flag at half-mast, and seemingly in dire distress.

His looks, his bearing showed the American, and though in the dress of a common seaman he looked like one born to command.

Tall, elegant in form, courtly in manner and handsome, he riveted the gaze of every eye as he rose, and to the various charges, for there were several, pleaded:

"Not guilty as accused."

For the purpose of "example," to intimidate their American foes, the British commandant had ordered the court-martial held in public, and there had gathered to witness what promised to be a remarkable trial, the most prominent subjects of the English king, and the best blood

of the Americans whom desire, or the chances of war had kept in the city of Boston during the siege of it by the patriots under Washington.

In a prominent part of the court-room sat a group more deeply interested than all others in the proceedings.

One was a man of striking appearance, an American boasting of the best blood in the Colonies, possessing riches, and known from his courtly manners, elegant style of dress and lavish entertainment of his friends as "Prince" Paul Revere.

He was a man with a history, and many stood in awe of him, but there was one whose slave he was and that one was his beautiful daughter, Pearl, who sat near him, and by the side of another maiden as lovely in face and form as herself, and whose striking resemblance to the prisoner proved her relationship to him of sister.

Upon the other side of the maiden sat a woman with sad, yet comely face, and whose hair, beginning to whiten, indicated that she had passed the two-score mile-post of life.

She was neatly dressed in deep black, and her large, magnificent eyes were fixed upon the prisoner, her son, with a mingled look of hope and despair.

Often did the gaze of "Prince" Paul Revere, the prominent American gentleman whose sympathy with the king caused him to be a prominent personage in British eyes, wander to the face of the matron and rest there an instant, and there were those among the older ones who saw his look who remembered that there had been a romance in the lives of the two many years before.

They recalled how pretty Ethel Noel had been engaged to handsome Stacey Stanwood, who had been reported lost at sea, but returned the very night appointed for the marriage of his lady-love to Paul Revere, and with just a moment to spare to prevent the ceremony.

Paul Revere had been equal to the occasion, for he bowed to his cruel fate, gave the hand of Ethel Noel to the man whose memory he knew she loved far more than she did himself, and left the elegant home of the Noels.

For years he was absent from the country, and one day returned with a lovely Cuban bride, who had died soon after the birth of her daughter, the young maiden who now sat in the court-room by the side of Ethel Noel, the daughter of her father's lost lady-love.

Those who looked back into the past recalled also that where there had always been but a cold intimacy between Paul Revere and the Stanwoods, his daughter owed her life to Noel Stanwood, the son of the handsome sea captain who had won Ethel Noel back from the very threshold of her marriage with another, and the three, Noel and Ethel Stanwood and Pearl Revere had been the best of friends.

Whatever his feelings were, or had been in the far by-gone, now that Captain Stacey Stanwood was in his grave at the bottom of the sea, and his son Noel a prisoner, charged with terrible crimes, Prince Paul Revere had come to the trial, and with his daughter was with the sorrowing mother and sister of the unfortunate young sailor.

There were also two more among the group deserving passing mention, for both of them were British officers giving by their presence friendly aid to the Stanwoods, who were known to be American patriots.

Once the Stanwoods had held exalted position in the community, but when Captain Stanwood was lost at sea, his partner in business proclaimed that bad speculations had ruined him, and the mother and children went from their elegant home, the grounds of which all joined those of the Revere mansion, to live in an humble cottage.

Noel went to sea and the aristocratic and wealthy friends, in success, deserted the widow and her children in poverty, with the exception of a very few.

The two officers referred to were in the full uniform of Britain's king, one wearing the rank of captain, the other that of a lieutenant in the Royal Navy.

The captain was Lord Erskine Enders, a gallant officer, one whose family could look back upon their career for centuries with great pride, and who possessed great wealth.

Captain Lord Erskine Enders had lately served upon the brig-of-war *Shark* in South American waters, and badly wounded had come home a short while previous to the trial of Sailor Noel Stanwood who had, though a prisoner, brought the unfortunate vessel back to port.

Whatever the charges against the prisoner, he had returned his firm friend, and at once sought to befriend the mother and sister.

The other officer was a lieutenant on the frigate *British King*, which had been also in southern waters, and at the time the brig *Shark* was there, and he, too, the firm friend of Lord Erskine was also in sympathy with the prisoner and his kindred.

Another group seated apart were in naval uniform, their ranks varying from commodore to midshipman, and then there were several seamen present, and from these officers and men it was said the testimony would come that would send the young sailor to the yard-arm.

Remembering Noel Stanwood as a dashing young captain of one of his father's vessels, in their days of prosperity, and a handsome, genial, generous fellow, his former associates in high life in Boston had assembled to see him on trial for crimes that it was said would cost him his life.

So it was that a very distinguished assemblage had gathered at the trial of a man who had written hero after his name on numerous occasions, and who now was under a cloud that had blackened it.

Of all present the prisoner seemed the least moved, except when he glanced over toward his mother and sister, and then a cloud would sweep over his manly, noble face, yet only for an instant.

He sat apart, with his ankles and wrists in manacles, and every eye was upon him, and none could fail to admire his cool courage in the face of his accusers.

At last all was ready; the judge-advocate, a stern old martinet commodore, was in his seat, and the court was ready to try "Noel Stanwood, American sailor, for mutiny, piracy, conspiracy against the king, and the murder of a superior officer."

CHAPTER X.

GUILTY, OR NOT GUILTY.

THE proceedings opened in the court by the reading of the charges against the prisoner, who, in answer thereto arose, unmindful of his clanking chains, and said in a voice that was as clear as the tones of a bell:

"I plead not guilty to the charges as therein stated."

Then it was shown that after the loss of his fortune Noel Stanwood had accepted the position as skipper of a trading schooner along the coast, and while so serving had captured, with the aid of a wrecked boat's crew he had picked up at sea, and a sergeant and a squad of marines who had taken passage on his vessel, a famous buccaneer known as Captain Crimson and his schooner.

The capture had been by a cunning device of the young skipper who allowed the pirates to board, without knowing of his extra help in the shipwrecked crew and marines, and the outlaw craft had been taken after a hot hand-to-hand fight, and brought into port as a prize.

It was this schooner which had been refitted and changed into a brig, and under the name of his Majesty's brig-of-war *Shark*, had sailed for Southern seas.

Some months after the sailing of the brig the young hero had struck down and left for dead his father's former partner, Frank Farley, from, the said Farley asserted, no other motive than to wish to kill him, and had escaped to sea in a barque that day to sail for Monte Video, having been purchased by the Government there.

Having delivered the barque to its owners, and afraid to come home, as he deemed Frank Farley dead, it was alleged that the prisoner joined a band of Peruvian pirates, but from bad treatment by them escaped and swam out to the brig-of-war *Shark* one night, while said vessel was anchored in a small harbor whither she had gone to fill her water-casks.

By warning the brig that Captain Crimson, the pirate whom he had captured on the Carolina coast, had escaped and come out in the brig as a sailor, but had gotten ashore and was to lead an attack upon his old vessel to capture her, the prisoner hoped to gain pardon for having, as he believed, taken the life of merchant Frank Farley.

The attack of Captain Crimson and his horde had been beaten off, and as the brig was short-handed Captain Kane, her commander, had made the prisoner, Noel Stanwood, acting boat-swain.

And the said Stanwood, while in that capacity, had insulted the first lieutenant, Sir Bradwyn Brule, upon the quarter-deck, and wresting his sword from his grasp had broken it and thrown the pieces into the sea.

It was further charged that on account of his having saved the brig from the pirates, Captain Kane had allowed the prisoner to go ashore at Callao, and he had challenged Lieutenant Sir Bradwyn Brule to fight a duel, and had in said duel taken that officer's life.

For said act he had been arrested by order of Commodore Tate, whose ship the British King was then at Callao, and commanded to be sent home in irons in the brig *Shark*.

It was further stated that the brig again put into the pirate bay, on her way home, but found no outlaws there; but while at anchor getting water, a large *goleta* filled with men ran out of a lagoon down upon her and a fierce fight followed, in which the prisoner had come to the rescue with the slightly wounded and sick which he had gathered to follow him, and having persuaded the guard to allow him to do so.

After doing so he went back to his irons, and the men were mentioned in his behalf, doubtless instigated by the prisoner.

On account of the severe wounding of Captain Kane, Lord Erskine his first lieutenant, and Lieutenant Caspar Caldwell his second, the brig was left in command of the Senior Midshipman Burt Willis and a small force in crew.

Sailing on her voyage she had been caught in a hurricane while rounding Cape Horn, and the great skill of the prisoner as a seaman being acknowledged, and the vessel in danger of being lost, Noel Stanwood's irons were taken off and he was placed in command of the *Shark* by Captain Kane, to bring her home.

Touching at a South American port Lord Erskine's wounds had necessitated his being sent at once home on a frigate bound to Boston, while the brig held on her voyage to various ports as dispatch ship, and so Noel Stanwood had commanded her until she dropped anchor in the harbor, where as she was to be at once fitted out to go on a cruise after the king's lost Silver Ship, the prisoner had been put in irons again and sent to the town prison to await his trial.

Furthermore it was said that while on the way to Boston the brig, under her sailor captain, the prisoner, had captured two French prizes, a privateer and a merchant craft, and sent them into port, but he had refused, when the *Shark* and her two prizes were together and could easily have done so, to capture or fire on an American rebel privateer that was certainly at their mercy, and boldly stated that as a patriot he would not raise hand against his own people and their fight for freedom.

Although all these charges had been made in public before, and discussed, their reading made a profound impression.

To the unprejudiced mind it looked as though the American sailor was a hero after all, in spite of some of the ugly charges of piracy, mutiny, challenging a superior officer to kill him and allowing an American privateer to go.

But to the Tory eye, and the general observer among the king's people, who looked at all from a one-sided view, it seemed that the prisoner was certainly guilty and should be put to death.

As for the prisoner he did not change color during the reading.

He seemed interested, yet hardly more so than others who were present.

And to all he pleaded "not guilty as charged."

Then the witnesses were called, but against the first, intent to kill merchant Frank Farley, no one appeared, and all eyes turned upon Lord Erskine, Enders who coolly met the stares directed at him, although he understood that every one knew that the reason the said merchant failed to appear was because he was lying very ill at home from a wound received a short while before in a duel with Lord Erskine.

As Mr. Farley failed to appear the charge would have been dismissed had not Lord Erskine arose and asked, in justice to the prisoner, if a witness present, when the merchant was left for dead by Noel Stanwood, might not state the facts as they were.

The old commodore had great regard for Lord Erskine, and more, being a poor man fond of luxurious living, he always knew where to borrow a hundred pounds or so, when needed for his debts, and just at that time owed the young nobleman a handsome sum, so granted permission for the witness to appear in justice to the prisoner.

To the amazement of all Pearl Revere was the witness, and in a clear voice she told how she had been visiting Ethel Stanwood, and not seeing her, Merchant Farley had approached, and what he said had angered her friend greatly, and just at that moment Noel Stanwood had approached and felled the merchant with a stinging blow.

Believing that the merchant was dead, for his head in falling had struck a stone, she, Pearl Revere, and Ethel had urged Noel to fly at once; and yielding to their entreaties, as the barque he was to command was ready to sail, he had at once left port, and then they, the two maidens, had found that the blow had only stunned Mr. Farley.

This statement not a soul dared to doubt, but it was thought that Merchant Farley had been guilty of more than Pearl Revere alleged, and for the sake of Ethel had been spared.

Against the charge of piracy the prisoner's own testimony was taken, viz: that he had been set upon in Montevideo by robbers, who had wounded and robbed him of his all, and he was driven to shipping before the mast upon a vessel bound for Peru.

The vessel was captured by Peruvian pirates, and to save his life he had joined them; but taken ill at their retreat he heard, while lying in his cabin ashore, that Captain Crimson had escaped from the brig, his old vessel, swam ashore, and as she was anchored in the little bay, intended to run out in a *goleta* and capture her.

He had at once decided to swim out to the brig and warn her, which he did, and thus had become acting-boatswain on board of her.

His manner was calm, his words few and to the point, and many began to feel that the prisoner was clearing the dishonor from his name, when Captain Carter Kane, a fine-looking old sea warrior, and the captain of the *Shark*, was called as a witness against the prisoner.

CHAPTER XI.

FOR AND AGAINST.

CAPTAIN KANE's testimony, if supposed to be against the prisoner, impressed the impression of

being just the other way, for he told how the prisoner had swam out through shark-infested waters to warn the brig of danger, and had risen from a sick bed to do so, while, but for his advice being followed in beating off the pirates the vessel would surely have been taken.

As to his affair with Lieutenant Brule, he knew nothing more than that, when on and off duty Sir Bradwyn Brule had seemed to have a cause of spite against the prisoner, and one day, when Lord Erskine was officer of the deck, the occurrence had happened which led to the duel.

The captain was still suffering from a wound which had kept him in his cabin on the whole voyage, and he was then on crutches.

Lord Erskine Enders, as officer of the deck when the trouble began between Sir Bradwyn Brule and the prisoner, took the stand and gave his testimony in a manner that caused much excitement.

It was as follows:

"I was on duty, and Brule, Caldwell and junior officers on deck, and the brig becalmed."

"Stanwood was engaged in work upon the binnacle light, when Brule showed a miniature of a lady, with a remark that he was engaged to her, and some uncomplimentary words."

"When asked who she was, Brule turned to the prisoner and said that he could tell, at the same time handing him the miniature."

"It was all as quick as a flash, the lie given by Stanwood to Brule, who attacked him with his sword, was disarmed, the blade broken, the pieces flung into the sea and a stinging slap given the officer upon the cheek."

"Of course I put Stanwood in irons at once, and reporting it to Captain Kane, was told to relieve him, as Stanwood was his guest, only acting boatswain, and Brule had provoked him purposely to do some act such as he had done."

"Stanwood went ashore at Callao, Peru, and Brule challenged him through Lieutenant Caldwell."

"I was Stanwood's second, and Lieutenant Bonair, of the British King, Midshipman Lumley, Surgeon Deas, a coxswain and four seamen came in the same boat with Brule and Caldwell, and all of them I see present."

"The first meeting was with swords, and Stanwood disarmed Brule and handed him his blade, which was accepted with an insulting remark and a demand for a second meeting with pistols."

"I demurred, but yielded, and Stanwood killed the man, who richly deserved his fate."

"Commodore Tate, of the British King, unaware of the exact situation, ordered Stanwood sent back in the brig in irons, and it is lucky for us that he was, for when again attacked by pirates, when Captain Kane lay wounded on the deck, I had three wounds, Lieutenant Caldwell had been sent below severely wounded, two junior officers were dead, and our crew cut to pieces, the prisoner whom you are here to hang, came to the rescue with men hardly able to stand and saved the ship."

"Back to his irons then he went, of his own will, and the men mutinied, when he told the leaders that it was his wish to return in irons."

"Again, when Midshipman Burt Willis, feeling that he could do no more to save the brig, so reported to Captain Kane, Stanwood's irons were knocked off and he took command, and the brig rode out the hurricane off Cape Horn and came into port with two prizes while under command of her prisoner captain."

"There are officers on the brig who are not friendly to the prisoner, for reasons best known to themselves, but let me here assert that not one of them can gainsay my testimony of what I saw and know, unless making false statements."

Thus the testimony of Lord Erskine ended almost with a challenge to any one who would dare report differently from what he had done, and there were those present who felt it.

Lieutenant Caldwell was called then, and the testimony he gave all came out by questioning, yet his answers led to the belief that Sir Bradwyn Brule had been in the wrong, that he had sent the challenge, had been spared by his adversary, and then met his death at his hands.

He admitted that the prisoner had done much to save the brig from the pirates, but the court must judge as to whether Stanwood was guilty or not of willful piracy himself before joining the *Shark*.

As to the brig's being in danger off Cape Horn, he was wounded and below decks, but he thought that she would have ridden out the storm under Midshipman Willis's command.

About the capture of the two prizes, it only went to show how readily the rebel privateer could have been taken by the brig, in spite of her small crew, for the American of course did not know that the three vessels had not two-score men between them all told.

He, Lieutenant Caldwell, had not been placed in command by Captain Kane, when ready to resume his duties, but served under the prisoner's orders, and had remonstrated with him about not capturing the rebel, and was told to attend to his own affairs, and that as an American he would not harm a patriot craft.

Upon this subject Lieutenant Caldwell became very communicative and said all that he could to cast the stain of being a "traitor to the king" upon the prisoner, and all could see that he was one of the officers at whom Lord Erskine had had his fling at the end of his testimony.

When asked who the lady was, whose miniature Sir Bradwyn Brule had shown on the brig's deck, Lieutenant Caldwell fell back behind his superior officer by the remark:

"Lord Erskine came to me personally, and asked me, as a favor to him, not to name the lady, should the question as to who she was be brought up."

All eyes again turned upon Lord Erskine, but he did not change color; but something the old commodore saw in his face caused him to prevent the question being urged.

Other witnesses were then called, and the attentive listeners came to the conclusion that the prisoner could not be found guilty.

But the court took another view, for he was an American, an avowed rebel, his own testimony alone stood as to having been forced to serve on a pirate craft to save his life, and most of all he had proven a traitor to the king in that he had refused to capture, or even fire upon a rebel privateer.

The finding therefore of the military court was against him, and he was adjudged guilty, but, in consideration for the valuable services he had rendered the brig and her crew, his sentence would not be to be hanged to the yard-arm, but instead he would be sent to England there to be incarcerated as a prisoner for life.

CHAPTER XII.

UNDER ANOTHER NAME.

It was evident that the verdict of the military court, sentencing sailor Noel Stanwood to an English prison for life, was received by many present with feelings of pleasure, and a few were disappointed that he had not been sent to the gallows.

But there were many more who felt that the only case the court had against the prisoner was his having allowed a rebel privateer to escape, and this should not have weighed heavily in the face of his having saved the brig on three occasions, brought her to port in safety, and also captured two prizes of value.

There was a show of animus against the prisoner on the part of nearly all the officers and men on the brig and the British King, and it arose from the fact that an American had accomplished so much, and stood as a rebuke to British naval officers.

Then too the American was of the merchant service, and more, though not trained as an officer he had disarmed and spared the life of the most dangerous sportsman and duelist in the English service, as had Sir Bradwyn Brule been known to be.

Also he had shown a deadly aim with the pistol, in the second meeting, and more, a courage through all that nothing could daunt. When the decision of the court was made the Americans all knew that Stanwood suffered because he was not an Englishman, and that the court retreated behind a seeming spirit of mercy in that they had not hanged him.

The prisoner's face did not change, and whether it was a joy or regret to him, not a soul could tell.

He received his sentence in silence, and when asked if he had aught to say against it, responded in an unmoved voice:

"No more than that as I know I am made to suffer as an American, I feel proud that I am a patriot, a rebel, if so it pleases the gentlemen of this august court."

That Lieutenant Caldwell had hoped that death would be the penalty, his face plainly showed, as did the countenance of Lord Erskine Enders that he considered the punishment an outrage.

"What do you think of the sentence, my lord?" asked one of the court, a pompous little captain of the Royal Navy.

"That not to consider that his gallant deeds more than canceled the one act of his being a rebel, and thus setting him free, was infamous," came the stern rejoinder, and others who heard the outspoken words of the nobleman winced under them, as did the dapper little questioner.

"But, my lord, the guilt of the prisoner as—"

"See here, Verney, your verdict settled the case, so don't reopen it with me, for I consider it infamous, as I said, and I shall see to it that the king gets the entire facts of the case," and with this shot Lord Erskine turned away, while he left behind him a very uneasy feeling in the minds of some of the court, for Commodore Tate of the British King frigate, Captain Carter Kane of the brig *Shark*, and Lieutenant Bonair of the frigate, those, with Lord Erskine, most conversant with the whole facts, seemed to feel that no punishment should have been meted out upon the evidence as given, with the merits of the case in Stanwood's favor to offset such acts of his that were open to censure.

Lord Erskine and Lieutenant Bonair hastened on after Prince Paul Revere and the three ladies, who had gone to the Revere carriage in waiting, and Lord Erskine said cheerily:

"Do not sorrow over the result, Mrs. Stanwood, you and Miss Ethel, for the king shall know of the affair, if I go to England to present it to him in full, and I shall bear the names of men whose influence will be felt, that the punishment was unjust."

"Do you not agree with me, Mr. Revere?"

"I cannot see why the fact of being a rebel was not more than offset by the many services rendered, and you may count upon any influence I may have, my lord, to urge upon the king a pardon."

"Thank you, my lord, and the pardon we must have, though it will doubtless result in sending a very daring and dangerous foe upon the seas against us—eh, Bonair?"

"Yes, Erskine, I am sure Stanwood would draw his sword for the patriot cause, once he was free," returned Lieutenant Brainard Bonair, and after seeing the ladies into the carriage, for Pearl Revere was to drive Mrs. Stanwood and Ethel home, the three gentlemen walked away upon their respective duties, for Lord Erskine was busy fitting out the returned brig for the special mission she was to go upon, and which was to hunt down the now famous Shadow Silver Ship.

Orders had come from the king to promote Lord Erskine to a captaincy, and to send him upon this mission, in the fleetest vessel that could be found in American waters.

No expense was to be spared in fitting the vessel out, and she was to be heavily armed with the best battery to be found, and equipped thoroughly, while her crew of a hundred seamen were to be picked men.

The vessel decided upon before her return from South American waters, was the brig *Shark*, as she was known to be a staunch craft, an able sea boat and remarkably fleet.

She could, by a new set of spars, carry far more sail area, and certain alterations in her hull would add to her speed, it was thought, and no expense was to be spared.

The duty of selecting his men, Lord Erskine placed in the hands of a certain prominent shipping merchant, with orders to pick every man for his physique and seamanly qualities, and as many shrunk from going in chase of a specter craft, each man was to be told the exact mission that the brig was to sail on, the capture of the Silver Ship, or its mysterious "Shadow," so that there should be no ignorance pleaded, once they were at sea, that they did not know they were going on a ghost-hunting cruise.

Among the officers of the brig, which was to be known no longer as the *Shark*, for Lord Erskine had appropriately named her the *Sea Shadower*, was Lieutenant Caspar Caldwell.

The conduct of this officer Lord Erskine had not liked, when it was directed against Stanwood, but when he humbled himself to ask for a junior officer's berth on board, as he was a splendid seaman the young captain was too just a man to allow personal feelings to influence him, so had offered him the position of second lieutenant, and it was granted by the naval commandante of the port.

One day a messenger ship arrived direct from England, and Lord Erskine received a number of important dispatches which sent him in haste to the naval commandante.

After a visit of long duration to him he walked rapidly back to his quarters and his valet handed him a note which had just arrived for him, and it was marked:

"PERSONAL AND IMPORTANT."

"Grimes, get all my traps ready, for I will sail for England just ten days from to-day."

"If any one calls, other than Lieutenant Bonair, or the officers of the *Sea Shadower*, I am to be excused," and so saying Lord Erskine read the note, after which he resumed his hat and cloak and walked rapidly away in the direction of the more handsome houses of the citizens, turning into a massive gateway that led to the elegant mansion of Paul Revere.

CHAPTER XIII.

A PAIR OF PLOTTERS.

THE note which Lord Erskine had received upon entering his quarters, or the voluminous dispatches which had come just before from London, had cast a deep shadow upon his face.

He walked along like one half in a dream, and mechanically spoke to several acquaintances whom he met.

When ushered into the elegant parlors of the Revere mansion, he found there Pearl and Ethel, the latter with hat and cloak on, and both welcomed him pleasantly, while the former said:

"It was kind of you, my lord, to come so soon after the reception of my note; but you look ill to-day."

"I came, Miss Revere, at once, as you requested, and because I have much to do in a very short while, for I have just received the sad intelligence from home of my noble father's death, the dearest friend I ever had, not to speak of his devoted regard for me."

Thus spoke the dutiful son, who through his father's death came into the title of Earl and one of the largest fortunes in England.

"You have my deepest sympathy, my lord,

in your deep affliction," said Pearl, in her sweet, frank manner.

"And mine, my lord," and Ethel offered her hand.

"You are both most kind, and I appreciate your sincere sympathy, and will tell you that I am ordered home by the first vessel, and naturally will have to ask leave for six months, to arrange my affairs in England."

"Then you will not command the *Sea Shadower* in her cruise after that mysterious vessel, my lord, which they call the specter of the King's Silver Ship?"

"No, Miss Revere, I have just resigned my place as captain, and the naval commandant was so good as to say that as another officer was to be her captain, he preferred to have him get his orders direct from the king, so he is to send the brig to England under Lieutenant Henshaw, and I will go as passenger in her."

"I am sorry we are to lose you so soon, my lord; but I hope you will again come to the Colonies."

"I certainly shall do so, for I am not going to remain idle in war times, when my king needs the swords of his subjects; but I am glad that I go at this time, for it will enable me to personally place the case of Mr. Stanwood before his Majesty, and urge for his pardon."

"Ah, my lord, you are so kind," said Ethel, and her eyes filled with tears, while Pearl said quickly:

"Yes, you are always good; but let me tell you why I wrote you to come to see me."

"I am at your service, Miss Revere."

"I heard to-day that Mr. Stanwood was to be sent to England in a few days, and the vessel had been selected that he would go in."

"May I ask if this is the case?"

"Yes, he was to go in the next dispatch vessel, but the commandant said that he would send him in the brig with me."

"You asked this of course?"

"Well, I felt that it would perhaps be pleasant for Stanwood to go in the same vessel with me, and as the commandant is aware that I have some influence with the king he was good enough to grant my request."

"In fact it was my intention to decide at the last minute to just cross the sea and have an audience with the king, and offer to take Mr. Stanwood with me, so all along had no idea of trusting him to the tender mercies of others until his Majesty had heard my story and seen the proofs, signed by others, that I have secured of the case."

"And you believe, my lord, that the king will pardon my brother?" Ethel asked.

"I have that hope, Miss Stanwood, though I know that much influence will have to be contended with against a pardon, and the king may, in a sudden humor, refuse, for he is very bitter just now against Americans."

"Then there is considerable doubt as to a pardon, my lord?" Pearl asked.

"There is, though I hope for a pardon for Mr. Stanwood."

"May I ask just when you are to sail, my lord?"

"On the tenth day from this, I have decided to sail."

For some reason, after knowing the date of the brig's sailing, both Pearl and Ethel seemed to show considerable anxiety, and soon after Lord Erskine arose to take his leave, and said:

"Miss Stanwood, I will call to say good-bye before my departure, and I wish you would tell your mother that I will do all in my power to save her nobleson, so that she must not worry about him."

"I also gained permission from the commandant to-day for you and your mother to call at the prison and see Mr. Stanwood, so you can do so each evening after dark, for it is best not to let the general public know that you have the privilege."

Ethel's joy was so great that she could not utter a word, for thus far they had not been allowed to see the prisoner, and anxious to avoid thanks Lord Erskine took a hasty leave.

Hardly had he disappeared from the mansion when Pearl said quickly:

"Come, Ethel, save yourself, for we must act at once."

"Yes, but, Pearl, will you carry out your bold plot that you spoke of, now that Lord Erskine's efforts may gain Noel a pardon?"

"Certainly, for if the king is in an ugly humor he will refuse even Lord Erskine, and we must take no chances."

"Oh, Pearl, you are so brave, and yet you will have to face far more than you think."

"Yet he has to face imprisonment for life."

"No, now is our chance, and fortune favored us in father's going last night to Halifax with Commodore Gates in his flagship."

"I will let the servants believe I am visiting you, and no one will know of our absence."

"The sailor who came to you, as your brother's friend, offering to make an effort to free Noel, must serve us, so go right home and send old Bennett for him to come here and I will tell my plan, and he can help us."

"If he fears to make the venture, then we will go by land in my carriage, for, as I told you, I have father's pass from Lord Howe,

when he expected to go through the lines ten days ago to visit the wounded British officer in Washington's camp."

"The pass reads:

"Pass Mr. Paul Revere and servant out of, and back into the British lines."

"It is signed, sealed and good as gold, only father did not use it, as word came that the colonel was dead."

"But what good can the pass do us, dear Pearl?"

"Listen!"

"I am all ears."

"The pass was written on the first of the month—so, 1st. Now I will change it to read 13th, which will be to-morrow, by making the s into a t and the t into an h and putting in the figure 3 which can all be easily done, for I have studied it out."

"Oh, Ethel, but—"

"It is for Noel, remember, and we are doing no great harm."

"Then I can make Paul read Pearl, Mr. read Miss, and servant, or servt. read maid, and I have a pass for to-morrow giving 'Miss Pearl Revere and maid' exit and entrance through the British lines."

"Do you see, my dear?"

"You have a wonderful head for plotting, Pearl."

"The circumstances of the case demand bold work, Ethel; but now go home and send for that sailor, Jack Ross, and then return and await his coming."

"If he refuses to venture by boat, then we will go by land and visit the great rebel chief, Washington."

"What an adventure it will be, too, Ethel."

Ethel seemed to fully realize the adventurous part of the daring plot as she hastened home; but if Pearl Revere was willing to risk so much for Noel, certainly she would not fail her brother at such a time.

So Bennett the old servant, who, with Lucy his wife, had clung to the fortunes of the Stanwoods in their poverty, was sent with a note to Sailor Jack Ross, asking him to come at once to the Revere Mansion.

Telling her mother of the good news, that Lord Erskine had gotten them permission to see Noel each evening, and intended to plead for his pardon in person to the king, but saying nothing then of Pearl Revere's bold plot to save the prisoner, Ethel hastened back to the home of her friend, inwardly all excitement, but outwardly perfectly calm, for she had the courage of her brother when occasion demanded nerve.

CHAPTER XIV.

JACK ROSS, SAILOR.

"THERE he comes, Pearl."

"He is prompt, and that argues well for us," responded Pearl, as from the window the form of a man in sailor garb was seen coming up the walk.

As the two maidens gazed at his approach from the library window, a huge watch-dog, which by some accident had slipped his collar and gotten into the front yard, bounded from the piazza directly upon the sailor.

Quick as a flash the sailor dropped upon one knee, seized the savage brute by the throat, and hurling him to the ground and deftly drawing his black silk scarf from his neck, bound it in a few seconds around the mouth of the dog, completely muzzling him.

Then with a kick he sent him flying toward the back yard, while he said with a light laugh to the pompous butler, who appeared in alarm:

"Call off your dog, Silk Stockings, or he'll hurt me."

"Yez must be ather bein' kin to the devil to make that same dorg turn tail like that, man."

"I am his cousin, Irish; but I didn't hurt your dog for I thought he was valuable to his master."

"And what is it yez is ather wanting here, Mishter Salt Water?"

"To see the lady of the house, old Kneebreeches, so pray tell her that Sailor Jack Ross awaits her sweet pleasure."

"Divil a bit will I, and divil a bit will the loikes o' yez see my leddy."

"If you don't bear my message to the lady, I'll muzzle you as I did the dog, and be my own flunkie."

"Mahone, show the gentleman into the library this instant, and be more respectful in future to my visitors."

Mahone started as though he had been shot at from an ambush, as he heard the voice of his young mistress behind him.

The sailor bowed low, as he doffed his tarpaulin, and said politely:

"Sailor Jack Ross, at your service, miss."

"I was told to come here and see Miss Revere."

"I am Miss Revere, Mr. Ross, so please come into the library," and Ethel led the way, while Jack slyly winked at Mahone as he passed, but elicited only a profound bow from that personage.

"Miss Stanwood you have met, Mr. Ross," said Ethel, by way of introduction.

"God bless her sweet soul, yes, miss; but I would never have met her had it not been for her

noble brother, to whom I owe my life more than one time."

"Be seated, Mr. Ross—"

"There, miss, please don't mister me, for I don't know how to answer the hail."

"I am plain Jack, miss, Jack Ross at your service, afloat or ashore."

"Well, Jack, we saw your bravery just now, and I do not believe one man out of a thousand could have put Savage to flight as you did."

"I hope he did not harm you."

"Oh no, miss, for I caught his throat, and you'll pardon my having no neck-scarf, for I loaned it to the dog."

"I have a very handsome one of my own you shall have in return, if you will accept it," said Pearl, amused with the handsome, frank young sailor, whose quick victory over Savage they had admired, and laughed at his conversation with Mahone, all of which they had overheard.

"I'll accept it with pleasure, miss, and many thanks to you; but I'll bring you a souvenir for your wedding the next voyage I make to foreign lands."

Pearl's face flushed and Ethel laughed, while Jack Ross took the seat which was urged upon him.

"Mr. Ross—"

"Jack, miss."

"Well, Jack, Miss Stanwood tells me that you came and asked her if some plot could not be arranged— Pray step to the door and see if Mahone is not outside."

The last was said in a whisper, and Jack glided across the room, threw open the door and sent Mahone sprawling upon the hall floor, for he had his ear at the keyhole, and the door opened outward.

"Mister Mahone, your mistress would like you to go and unmuzzle the dog and muzzle yourself, for you are dangerous to run at large."

The two girls could not restrain their laughter, while Mahone gathered himself together and slipped away as fast as his legs could carry him, muttering prayers for the damnation of the sailor's soul.

With a light laugh Jack closed the door and returned to his seat, and Pearl continued:

"You wished to enter into a plot for the escape of Mr Stanwood?"

"Yes, miss, for his escape if it could be arranged quietly, or his rescue, that failing."

"You see, miss, I was a prisoner to Captain Crimson, and was to be made walk the plank the very night following his capture by Captain Stanwood."

"When the brig went to southern waters I was in her, so it was Captain Noel Stanwood saved us twice from the pirates and once in a hurricane."

"Now the men of the brig, the old crew, don't want to see him sent to prison, and I called on Miss Ethel to ask her if she could not plot with me his escape."

"She could tell me no way, and so I said we would raise a mob, storm the prison and have him out in a few minutes, and all arranged for his escape."

"But Miss Ethel said it would cost many lives and must not be done, and she knew her brother would not wish it, so I gave up the idea, and with a mate, also true to the captain, was studying up another plan when I got the note calling me here, and I hope your two pretty heads together can see the way clear to save the young captain, for he's a patriot, true as steel, and I wish to serve under him yet on the deck of an armed craft to fight the British," and Jack Ross stopped short, as he felt that he might have over-shot the mark, having heard that Pearl's father was an American upholder of the king.

"I admire you, my man, for expressing your views frankly, and it is because we have confidence in you that Miss Stanwood and myself desire your aid in rescuing Captain Stanwood," said Pearl.

"I am yours to command, ladies, Jack Ross, sailor, an American patriot, and ready to risk my life to save the best captain that ever trod a deck, for I have seen him serve."

"Just say what I can do, and I'll go to work."

"Well, we wish you to see General Washington, Jack."

"So do I want to see him, lady, but he can do nothing for Master Noel."

"Yes, we think he can—in one way."

"You have got some plan stowed in your head, miss."

"Yes, we wish to see if you can reach General Washington and state the case to him?"

"I could do so, miss, by going to sea and running down to Lynn, and thus go by land across to Cambridge, where the patriot chief is now said to be quartered, miss."

"You would not attempt to go by land, then?"

"I could not get through the British lines, miss, and would be shot, maybe, by the Americans if I did."

"It's safer to go by sea, by far, ladies."

"But you must have a good boat!"

"Yes, miss, a stiff craft that can sail like the wind, for I've got to run the gantlet of the harbor boats, and a frigate, a brig and a schooner

in the bay below, for they board all outgoing craft, you know."

"Do you know if you could get such a boat?"

"There's a shallop there now that run in past all the guard boats a week ago, and sailed like a witch."

"The old skipper knows he could not get out, for his crew will not sail with him, so he's willing to sell out for a small price and go home as best he can."

"What do you mean by a small price, Jack?"

"Well, miss, I've got several hundreds laid up and guess I can buy her with it."

"No, not a dollar of your money must you touch, for I have ample, and will give you three hundred pounds, and more if you need it, so buy your shallop and be ready to start."

"When, miss?"

"To-night, if possible."

"And the duty I am to perform, miss."

"Go to General Washington and state the case of Captain Stanwood as it is."

"Tell him that just ten nights from now the brig-of-war, Sea Shadower, the fleetest sailing craft in the English Navy, sails for England, having been fitted out, armed and manned to go in search of the mysterious vessel known as the Shadow Silver Ship."

"Yes, miss."

"And tell him that upon that vessel, a prisoner in irons, will be Captain Noel Stanwood, on his way to England to serve a sentence for life for crimes he is guiltless of."

"Yes, miss."

"And tell him if he can send several fleet American privateers out to lie in wait for the brig, he can rescue Captain Stanwood and get a splendid craft for his country's service; but that there is one person on board, a passenger, who must be allowed to go free, and that is Lord Erskine Enders."

"The plan is a good one, miss, and would work all right if I was known."

"But not a soul do I know in the patriot lines, and I would not be believed or trusted in, and it would take some one of influence to cause General Washington to act in the matter."

"But I can get the shallop, and a mate and be all ready, only you must send some one that can prove all is as you state by showing their authority."

Quickly came the response:

"You are right, Jack; but I know General Washington, and I will go myself."

"You, lady?"

"Yes, so get your shallop ready and I will board her to-night."

"Not alone, Pearl, for I will go too," said Ethel in a decided tone.

CHAPTER XV.

THE NIGHT VENTURE.

JACK ROSS was dumb with amazement at the decision of the two young ladies.

He had expected some American known to Washington as a sympathizer, and whom the maidens knew and could get to go along, would have to be his passenger; but that he would have two such beautiful girls to protect through the danger of running the gantlet at night he neither expected or cared for.

So he at once began to urge against it.

But Pearl Revere was not one to yield, once she had made up her mind as to her course.

"The shallop is a safe vessel, is it not?"

"Yes, lady, perfectly so."

"And has a cabin?"

"One of the neatest little cabins you ever saw, miss."

"Well, we are both good sailors and will go."

"You get the shallop and take her off the cottage of Mrs. Stanwood after nightfall, and we will have what we need in the way of stores and bedding ready to take on board."

"Then, when you think best to sail, come up to the cottage for us and you'll not find us either cowards, or in the way, I'll pledge you, Jack."

"But, lady—"

"Now Jack, Captain Stanwood must not be taken to England, and the patriots must capture a fine vessel-of-war, so we are determined, and it is useless to further argue against it."

"Not a word more will I say, miss, for you are captain."

"Then wait until I get you the money, and then lose no time."

Ten minutes after Jack Ross was on his way down to the harbor.

There, not far off-shore lay at anchor a small shallop of ten tons, and as pretty a craft as a sailor's eye would wish to look upon.

It was her first voyage, and all about her was in perfect shape.

Upon the deck sat her skipper, an old weather-beaten sailor, who had won fame by boldly running in under fire of forts, vessels and guard-boats and after coolly dropping anchor told the officer who boarded him that he was too deaf and near blind to know that they were firing at him.

He had a cargo of vegetables and fresh meats, which sold well to the besieged soldiers, but he was told not to again put to sea, so he dismissed

his crew and was waiting for something to turn up in his favor.

And something did "turn up" in the shape of Jack Ross, who, after some talk with the old skipper, bought his shallop for a hundred and fifty pounds, and told the old man to get permission of the harbor captain to take her over to a certain anchorage and unbend her sails so as to lay her up.

"When you get there, begin work, only don't dismantle her too fast, old lad, and about good dark just row ashore in line with a white cottage on the hill, and I'll be there with the balance of your money, for here are fifty pounds as a proof of good faith."

The old man promised, and a short while before sunset, Pearl and Ethel, who were at the Stanwood cottage, saw the little shallop anchor and her skipper begin to strip her of her canvas.

Soon after dark the old skipper came ashore in his light skiff, and there stood Jack Ross, and with him a young man, also in sailor garb.

"You don't want no pilot for your work, stranger?" asked the skipper.

"Not I, for I was born on the bay and know it as I do my good mother's face," answered Jack.

"You are going to have a rough night."

"I'm glad of it," and the skipper then said:

"I've got confidence in you, lad, and if you'll accept a hand free, I'll go, for I want to git home."

"It's a go, so I'll take you and my mate out so you can get to work, and I'll come ashore for my passengers."

Nick Norcross, the young sailor, and old Skipper Welby were rowed out to the shallop, and returning ashore, Jack Ross decided to hide his oars, in case any one should stroll along, and going behind a large rock near came full upon a crouching form.

The man attempted to run, but the young sailor was upon him quick as a flash, and with a pistol thrust into his face cried:

"Now, sir, who are you that is watching me?"

"Oh, surl! I'm afther bein' Mahone, with a message from the leddies, sur, up at the cottage, and they sint me to say you was not to come up, sur, but I would come down along with 'em."

"Mahone, I have no more confidence in you than I have in your master's dog, so I'll be on the safe side."

"Come, into that boat, sir, and I'll stand no nonsense."

"Oh Howly Saint Patrick, but I'll be kilt, sure, for—"

"Either get into that boat, or say your prayers, for I am in earnest."

The Irishman obeyed the first order, and taking his oars the sailor pulled back to the shallop.

"Nick."

"Ahoy, Jack."

"I've got something here I wish you to gag and bind securely and then stow forward."

Mahone groaned, but was yanked out of the boat by Nick's strong arm, while Ross at once rowed back to the shore.

Going up to the cabin he found the two girls and Mrs. Stanwood awaiting him.

"Oh, sir, but it will be a bad night at sea," said Mrs. Stanwood.

"After I round Deer Island, madam, it will not take me long to run under the lee of Nahant, and I hardly think we'll get the full force of the storm under several hours."

"God grant it, sir; but Miss Revere and my daughter are determined to go, as it is to save my poor boy, and I feel that Heaven will protect you in the good work."

"Yes, madam, we'll go through, even if we do see a little powder burnt and meet a rough sea and gale; but the shallop is as fast as a bird, and stiff as a church, and for the cruise I've named her the Two Angels, after the young ladies."

Soon after, loaded with stores and bundles, for their comfort, Jack led the way down to the shore, while Mrs. Stanwood, old Bennett and Lucy followed.

Farewells were said when they reached the shore, and with a fervent prayer for their protection, Mrs. Stanwood saw them row away in the darkness.

Reaching the shallop they stepped lightly on board and descended into the cabin, both exclaiming at its comfort.

Jack introduced Skipper Welby and Nick Norcross, and then, as all was ready, ordered the anchor up.

"We'll start under as little sail as possible, so as not to attract attention, but be ready to dress her up lively, skipper, you and Nick, if we have to run for it, and with this stiff breeze she will fairly fly."

"There, we are off, so now go forward, please, and look out for the guard-boats."

A moment more the shallop was upon her way to run the dangerous gantlet.

CHAPTER XVI.

RUNNING THE GANTLET.

THE home of Widow Stanwood was upon an elevation, not very far from where, at that time,

was a very large fortification across Boston Neck, and the shallop had been brought to anchor within easy rifle-range of the guns.

Upon heading out from the anchorage Jack Ross had to lay his course for Governor's Island, intending to then beat down the harbor, past Castle Island, for the wind came from the sea.

When Castle Island was dropped a mile astern he could lay his course upon the port tack directly between Deer Island and Nick's Mate.

To round Deer Island and then square away with the wind over the starboard stern quarter would have logged him about seven miles, with a run of six more before he could get under the lee of Nahant, with three miles more into Lynn Harbor.

This was the course which Jack Ross meant to take, and in asking old Skipper Welby for his opinion he gave the same, only remarking:

"But thar's ther sloop-of-war anchored at the head o' Governor's Island, lad, and ther Castle, with a brig to seaward down o' Castle, not to speak o' a frigate off the landward point o' Thomson's, and mayhap the bay cruising-schooner a-hidin' somewhar around Spectacle Island, not to speak o' ther guard-boats."

"Oh, I knows, for I cum in among 'em, and give 'em a chance ter burn powder as yer knows."

"Yes, I do know, for I was on Dorchester Neck and saw you run in, and you did it well, skipper, so says Jack Ross."

"Well, maybe I did, and right whar yer hand be on ther tiller yer'll find two bullets stuck, one from a musket on ther schooner, and t'other from a officer's pistol in one o' ther guard-boats."

"I am very glad to have you along, skipper, I assure you, for if we are hunted, then you know what to do if I go under, and Nick don't know the bay."

"But the ladies are coming on deck now, and they can stay until it begins to get warm, I guess."

The two girls now came upon deck, and were given seats in the cockpit, to windward, and made comfortable, for the night was cold and the wind piercing.

The skies were overcast now with the blackest of clouds, but the lights of the town were plainly visible, with others on Castle Island and a sloop-of-war lying near.

The wind was already blowing half a gale, and threatening a fierce sea storm before the night was over, while the bay had begun to be choppy and foam-crested.

"I cannot see how you can find your way in such darkness, Captain Jack," said Pearl, glancing about her.

"Same as you can, miss, in your own home-grounds of a dark night," was the answer, while Ethel remarked:

"And the darkness is better for our purpose, is it not?"

"Yes, miss, only I wish the shallop's sails were not so new, for she looks like a ghost against the blackness."

"It is an ugly night, but you must not mind us, Captain Jack, for we are both good sailors, never sea-sick, and can lend a hand if need be."

"Just like your brother, miss, and as brave when the need comes."

"I am proud to have you along, and I'll do my best to run Two Angels through."

"Meaning the shallop, of course," Pearl said, pleasantly.

"The shallop Two Angels, miss, and Two Angels she carries," was the gallant reply, and Pearl returned:

"We must not talk to you now, for you have all you can do."

But Jack Ross did not seem to hear her words, as his eyes were bent ahead.

"Dick."

"Ay, ay."

"Is not that a guard-boat under sail ahead?"

"Ay, ay, sir—jib hid her from me."

"You must keep your eyes open then forward."

The words were so stern that the two maidens could hardly believe they came from the lips of Jack Ross; but they showed he could be in deadly earnest when the time came for it.

"Ay, ay, sir," promptly answered Nick Norcross, who felt he was in the wrong, while the old skipper muttered:

"I has good eyes, but that young captain has got telescopes in his head, by Jerusha!"

Had the guard-boat been sooner seen the shallop could have held up closer and passed over a cable's length further away than was now possible, and it was evident that she had not been seen by the watch though she soon must be.

"Shallop ahoy! what craft is that, and where bound?" called out a loud voice from the boat just a moment later.

"Dispatch boat from the fortification in the Neck to the castle, sir," was the perfectly cool response of Jack Ross, and both Pearl and Ethel breathed more freely, for there was no longer any doubt as to the helmsman having been the very man they needed for the work.

"You don't look like a dispatch boat. Lay to, or I'll fire into you!"

"Ay, ay, sir! If you will come up into the

wind, I'll round to under your lee, and send my boat aboard, for it is too rough to come along-side."

"He will discover us if you do," cried Pearl.

But Jack Ross did not heed her and let the shallop fall off a trifle as though to jibe and follow out his words, for he saw that the guard-boat had already come up into the wind.

But a moment after he was flying along as rapidly as before.

"Ho, you lubberly skipper! Round to! round to!" yelled the officer on the guard-boat.

"Ay, ay, sir; my sheet-rope is jammed, but it will be free in a minute—that is, we will," and the last words were uttered to the two maidens.

The guard-boat waited awhile longer, and then came a scattering fire after the shallop, now out of range.

Jack Ross laughed, and said quietly:

"That gives the alarm, and I will have to run between Bird Island and Governor's, stretching over toward Apple Island and then beat up."

The firing of the guard-boat did give the alarm to the sloop-of-war, on board of which the drums beat to quarters, and yet the shallop had shot by her before being discovered, and was far away when her port side was illumined by a flash, and a shot came flying over the topmast of the little fugitive craft.

"Good for you, sloop-of-war; but you'll only get one more in at us," said Jack Ross, and he held up so as to get the upper end of Governor's Island between him and the fire.

One more shot the sloop did get, but it flew wild, and the shallop was heading toward the rear end of Apple Island and fairly flying like a bird, pointing right into the wind's eye.

The other guard-boats about the harbor answered the alarm now by burning blue lights, while the frigate and brig answered the signals from the sloop-of-war by also sending up rockets.

But no one seemed to know just what the trouble was, or where to look for the cause of the firing.

The wind was increasing to a gale, and blowing as cold as Greenland, with the spray blown from the wave-crests stinging like a knife-cut where it struck the faces of those exposed, and freezing on the decks as it fell.

Muffled up completely, yet Pearl and Ethel could realize how bitter was the night.

As for Jack Ross, he seemed not to heed the cold, and had cast aside his storm-coat, appearing in his stout jacket, and with tarpaulin pulled down over his eyes, rested his gloved hand upon the tiller, while, crouching low, he kept his eyes fastened upon the course ahead.

CHAPTER XVII.

THROUGH FIRE AND TEMPEST.

FINDING that he could not pass to windward of Apple Island, Jack Ross lost no time in trying to do so, but put about on the starboard tack and pointed for the sea shore of Governor's Island.

"Aho! at the helm!" came from Nick Norcross.

"Ay ay, sir."

"A guard-boat putting out from Governor's."

"I see her now; but do you locate the Bay Guard schooner?"

"No, sir."

"I seen a light coming eastward of Spectacle, sir, and moving."

"They has doused the'r glim now, but it must ha' been ther schooner a-comin' up to jine in ther fireworks," said the old skipper.

"Doubtless," and Jack Ross showed no sign of knowing that if it proved to be the schooner, she could head him off from rounding Deer Island, and with her light draught follow him across to Nahant.

But Pearl realized it, and said:

"If the schooner is coming in, and off Spectacle Island, she can head us off, sir, can she not?"

"It is about the worst place she could be for us, and I did hope she was somewhere in Nantasket Road; but the bad weather has driven her in for a better anchorage, I guess."

"If it should prove to be the schooner, what is to be done?" asked Ethel Stanwood, calmly, though her heart throbbed violently with dread.

"We will wait and see, miss; but just now I've got that guard-boat upon my hands."

This seemed a hint for silence, and the maidens took it, while the shallop flew on her way, sending the spray flying high from her sharp, high bows, where, unmindful of the cold and drenching they received, the skipper and Nick Norcross were crouching down on the watch.

"You see how ther guard-boat heads, cap'n?" called back the skipper.

"Ay, ay."

"You is standin' in almighty close toward the east landin'," came the skipper's warning from forward a moment after.

"That is my intention," was the only answer vouchsafed by the young sailor, who had now become the stern, skillful commander.

A moment after, just as the guard-boat slightly changed her course, all on the shallop were startled by Jack Ross's loud hail:

"Ho, the guard-boat, ahoy!"

"Ay ay, sir."

"Have you just left the island?"

"Ay ay, sir."

"Is Lord Howe there, can you tell me?"

"No, he is on board the frigate, British King to-night."

"Thank you, sir, she lies north of Spectacle Island, I believe?"

"She does; but what craft is that?"

"The shallop Rescue, just impressed to send down after Lord Howe. Is that you, Trigg? I am Lieutenant Caldwell, of the Sea Shadower."

"Ay ay, Caldwell; but what the devil is the row in the harbor?"

"Washington is moving upon the town," and the shallop was beyond the distance to say more. Just then Skipper Welby came aft, and said:

"Cap'n, yonder do be ther schooner, and she have got us; but I don't feel no more uneasy, fer he as holds ther helm what kin lie as you kin, thar hain't no danger but that he c'd scoot past Saint Peter at ther heavenly gates with Cap'n Kyd ther Pirit in tow."

"Cap'n, I are proud o' yer, and Zeke Welby from Kennebec never goes back on his word."

"Thar be ther schooner, jist six p'int off yer lee bow," and Skipper Zeke Welby returned to his post.

The merry laugh at his words from Jack Ross was contagious, and the two girls joined in, while Pearl said slyly:

"As Skipper Zeke Welby of Kennebec says, you seem to have a story for every new-comer, Captain Jack Ross."

"You certainly fooled Captain Trigg, whom I once knew," Ethel added.

"Well, we have now got to fool Captain Sanford, of the Bay Guard schooner Ocean Outpost, and that will not be so easy—Ho, forward!"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Set her flying jib and topsail."

"Will she stand it, Jack?"

"She must, Nick."

"She'll stand anything, this heur craft will, by gosh, and you bet the skipper at that tiller knows," said Zeke Welby in commingled admiration for his late vessel and the young sailor.

"He plans ahead, and he already has some bold plot formed," whispered Pearl to Ethel.

"I have perfect confidence in him, and I believe the schooner is all we have to fear now," Ethel said.

Hardly had she spoken when from the sloop-of-war up the harbor went up rockets in rapid succession, green, blue, white, red, until two-score or more had gone up.

"Ah! I can read your signals, Sir Britisher, and it tells us that we are passing between Apple and Governor's Island, and heading seaward between Deer Island and Nick's Mate."

"See, the brig answers, also the frigate—yes, and there goes the response from the schooner that she is between Deer Island and Spectacle, to head us off."

All on the shallop had seen the various rocket signals, and the maidens, as the schooner Ocean Outpost, showed her exact position, felt like all hope was gone.

"We are in a box, skipper, but Jack knows what he is about," said Nick Norcross to Zeke Welby, who answered:

"If he don't, then may I never see old Kennebec's blue waters again—your mate are a wonder as a liar and a sailor, two mighty good virtues when they is needed."

The course that the shallop was now on was directly toward the little schooner-of-war.

The latter was north by east of Spectacle Island, about a mile and a half from the lower end of Deer Island, which Jack Ross had hoped to round, and thus make to sea.

The shallop was due north of Spectacle Island, running on a course directly for the schooner, from which she was a mile distant.

Not a light was visible upon the shallop, while the schooner's light could be seen.

Still Jack Ross felt that he could not hope that he was not discovered by the guard cruiser.

If there was any doubt about this, it was at once dispelled by the sudden burning of blue lights upon the Castle, which illumined the bay with a weird glare, and ere its light died away, others on the guard-boat they had passed last, upon the frigate British King, upon the schooner and again upon Castle Island, made the bay as bright as day for a moment.

There was the shallop, plainly seen now, and under full sail rushing on a course that showed she meant to try and dash by the schooner out to sea.

The light revealed the fine face of the young helmsman, calm as a May morn, fearless and determined, and the eyes of Pearl and Ethel were fastened upon it for some trace of fear, or anxiety.

The look they saw there gave them hope; but, hope died away when they realized that the schooner was directly in their course and could never be passed.

At least it so seemed to them.

The skipper and Nick forward had devoted their eyes to taking in the whole situation during the burning of the blue lights.

The result of this was the hail from Nick Norcross:

"Aho! the helm!"

"Ay, ay, Nick," and the voice was muffled.

"There is a guard-boat lying close in toward Deer Island Point, and she's one of the large, rough-weather crafts."

"I saw her, Nick."

"And there's another near the schooner, capturing, with a second to her port bow and a few cable-lengths away, and they are heading so as to cut yer off ter seaward, while ther frigate does as much for yer on t'other side, with three guard-boats a-comin' down on yer astern."

"I got a glimpse of our surroundings, skipper, and they are not cheering—oh! there comes a gun from the Castle!"

As Jack Ross spoke there came a bright flash from the Castle fort and a shot went over the shallop.

A moment after the large, sea-going guard-boat off Deer Island Point fired a twelve-pound shot from its bow howitzer, and Captain Trigg, who had now realized how cleverly he had been deceived in the shallop, sent a six-pound shot from his bows, for his guard-boat had turned and was in chase.

To show that she meant to be formidable the schooner opened fire as a demand for the shallop to come to, and following the roar of her long eighteen came the deep boom of a heavy gun from the frigate at anchor to the southwest of Castle Island and a mile and a half away.

"Bark away, bulldogs and pups, but you have not caught us yet," cried Jack Ross, and then he continued rapidly:

"You should be below, ladies, but then the danger would hardly be lessened unless we were in reach of small-arms."

"No, we will remain on deck," said Pearl.

"By all means, for we will not have you risk danger we shrink from," Ethel rejoined.

"You're plucky; but if I had no ladies on board I'd make that schooner believe I intended to come to astern, and before she could get around in chase we would be half a mile away and it would take crack shooting to hit us then."

"But you will not do this with us on board?"

"No, miss, I will not let you take chances on a shot I can avoid."

"You surely do not intend to surrender, Captain Ross?" cried Pearl.

"Not I, miss! but with those craft astern, and the schooner and her guard-boat cutting us off from rounding the point of Deer Island, I've got to try another plan."

"Heaven help us! I can see no other."

"Nor I," said Ethel.

"I think I do," was the cool remark of the young sailor, and he called to the old skipper and Nick to lower the topsail and flying-jib and soon after they had done so the storm of wind broke furiously upon them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SHALLOP'S FLIGHT.

BOTH Ethel Stanwood and Pearl had now begun to fully realize how desperate the undertaking they had ventured upon was becoming.

The storm was certainly in their favor, with the cold also, but it was a terrible night to be abroad even in a large vessel, and the creeping of the guard-boats out from under the lee of the islands, and the coming in of the schooner for a safer anchorage, showed that their commanders fully understood how terrible their experience was to be did they remain exposed to the cold and the tempest.

Only the sea-going guard-boats were now abroad, and these would have been in a place of refuge but for the alarm caused by the shallop's bold run out.

If taken, Pearl began to feel how terrible it would be for her father, who would at once be looked upon with suspicion, while she would be regarded as a spy, they being Americans, and Ethel, as the sister of Noel Stanwood, would be made to suffer, she was sure.

In view of this fact she spoke to Jack Ross about it, with an explanation of the dangers.

"I felt that you did not really know the great risk, miss; but I thought of it all beforehand, and I am not uneasy, now, as to the result."

"Do you mean that you can escape?"

"It's just what I intend to do, ladies, so trust Jack Ross to do it."

"We have perfect confidence in you, my good friend."

Jack bowed and turned to the skipper and Nick who now made their way aft.

He had shortened sail in time, and he could not but feel that the shallop had then all she could stand, with mainsail and jib, and more than many another much larger craft would have carried; but she must bear it, he well knew.

"Skipper, have you ever been through Shirley Gut?"

"Say, lad, do you mean it?" excitedly said the old skipper.

"I do mean just that. Do you know the Gut?"

"I've been through in boats smaller than this craft."

"You told me she draws three feet three, when in ballast?"

"To the inch, lad."

"With this tide at the shallowest part of the

channel through the Gut, on the bar, there is four feet."

"Nine inches to spare, lad, under her keel."

"We'll make it, so ease off sheets as I'll head her for the pass."

"You know best, captain," and old Zeke Walby and Nick stood by the sheet-ropes and the shallop's course was suddenly changed, and she went driving away directly for the channel known as Shirley Gut, and which was between Point Shirley and the head of Deer Island.

"Stand by to lower her peak, Nick, when I need it, and you, Skipper Zeke, keep forward and watch the approach, for I want all your aid now."

"You'll git it and welcome, capting; but what about that prisoner forward, for he are a' most skeert ter death, and half friz with the cold."

"Lady! I had forgotten we had a passenger."

"A passenger?" cried Ethel and Pearl together.

"Yes; it is Mahone, your butler, Miss Revere."

"Mahone! and here?"

"Oh, I was sure you did not know he was not at home on duty; but, I found him spying behind a rock where I landed, so I just brought him aboard and told Nick to gag and bind him, and I had forgotten him, but will have them bundle him into the cabin now, or he'll freeze."

"He intended to play the spy upon us."

"He did play it, miss—no, Nick, you and skipper Zeke bring that Irish gentleman aft and bundle him into the cabin."

They dragged aft with great difficulty Mahone with fright and cold, not to speak of seasickness, for the shallop was plunging and heeling terribly under her tremendous pressure of canvas.

"Take the gag out of his mouth, Nick, and throw something over him to keep him warm—there now stand by the peak balyard."

Neither Pearl nor Ethel uttered a word in their amazement, and now turned their attention wholly to the daring young helmsman.

The change in the course of the shallop had not been noticed for some little time from the guard-boats or schooner, and then the increasing fury of the storm had caused them to look to their own safety.

But when at last, it was seen that the shallop was making for Shirley Gut, she was given up for lost, for the sail she carried caused her to look like a vessel double her tonnage and to go through such a channel was set down as utterly impossible.

So they all, the schooner and three guard-boats, headed for Shirley Gut to be under lee of Deer Island and send boats in to take off whoever happened to be upon the wreck, for it was a foregone conclusion that the shallop was rushing to her destruction, or rather hard aground in the Gut.

But the schooner and the largest guard-boat, the one coming up from Deer Island Point, opened fire hotly, and the Castle, again getting the range of the shallop, also sent her shots flying fast and furious after the flying fugitive craft.

"It will be accident if we are hit," answered Jack Ross coolly, and as he spoke a shot passed through the mainsail.

"I told you so, and they cannot do it again," he added quickly; and his words were verified, as the shallop was untouched, though a few iron-messengers fell very near her.

"Am I aiming right, skipper?"

"You be, straight as a arer, lad, and if yer keel don't interfere with ther bottom, we'll go through slick," was the reply.

"The water is shoaling fast. Lower away the peak, Nick, for she's hard to manage now with so little water under her."

"Ay, ay, sir; lowered it is!" came in Nick's professional sailor tones, and the result was at once marked in the sailing of the shallop, which no longer bent so to the fierce wind, and held a more even course.

"Skipper, you and Nick do all you can to single reef her while we are in the pass, for we won't dare carry so much sail outside."

"Ay, ay, capting, just as you says, but this here craft can't be downed by no canvas yer kin set on her spars."

"I am glad to know this; but see! we are in smoother water, under the lee of Deer Island, and once through the Gut we can lay our course straight for Lynn Harbor."

"Yas, lad, once we git through we kin," and Captain Zeke's words implied a grave doubt that the shallop would ever "git through," as he expressed it.

"Should we fail, ladies, let me tell you that the boat belonging to the shallop, and now on deck, is a life-skiff, and has a stump mast and leg-of-mutton sail."

"In it we can continue the run on to Lynn, though of course the voyage will be a very nasty one, cold and wet for you."

"But we will not mind it if the boat will carry us."

"It will carry a dozen, Miss Revere, and we are not half that number."

"Yes, with Mahone."

"Ah, yes, I had forgotten him; but we'll take him along, too, and make him a present to General Washington, as a specimen of a wild Irishman," and Jack's light laugh showed that he

was not imbued with the slightest idea of failure.

The firing of the Castle now ceased, but the sea-guard boat and schooner still kept it up, though with no more damage to the shallop.

Skipper Zeke Welby and Nick Norcross had been reefing the mainsail as best they could, and then a call from Jack Ross told them that the moment of greatest danger had come.

"Throw the lead, Nick."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Skipper, keep your eyes ahead."

"I'll do it, sir, but in this darkness I can't see nothin'."

"I will feel my way through then—What is it, Nick?"

"One fathom!" sung out Nick Norcross.

By swerving from his course a few points both to seaward and windward, and marking the calls of Nick Norcross with the lead, Jack Ross got his idea of just where the channel was and it was shown by the sailing of the shallop.

"Quarter less six," sung out the leadman.

"Ay, ay."

"Five feet!"

"All right, sir."

"Quarter less five!"

"I hear!"

"Half less five."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Four feet!" and Nick's voice raised almost to excitement.

"I know it, sir," came the cool response, and the skipper muttered to Nick:

"Mate, thet lad are cooler than this freezin' night be."

"Four feet!"

"Good!"

"Quarter less six," almost shrieked Nick.

"We are over," and, as he uttered the words, a shot from the schooner tore along the decks of the shallop, followed by a yell of terror from Mahone.

CHAPTER XIX.

AN ALLY IN EARNEST.

"ANYBODY hit?" called out Jack Ross, and for the first time his voice showed anxiety.

"Oh yis, sur! I'm kilt intoirely," cried Mahone.

"Nick, you'll have to gag that fellow again, for he is reviving."

"But, may he not have been wounded, sir?"

"No, Miss Revere, for the shot cut along the deck. I feared that Nick or Skipper Zeke might be; but Irish is all right, far safer than you are."

"And there is no more danger of capture?"

"Not a bit, for I will luff now and reef, and then we can go flying for Lynn, and be at anchor long before dawn, so if you wish to go into the cabin I'll put Irish forward in the steerage."

"No, we prefer to remain on deck; but will not the schooner follow us?"

"She draws five feet and a half, so will have to go around Deer Island and that will give us over a league start."

"And the guard-boats?"

"Not one of them will dare venture through the pass into this sea."

The sails were now single reefed and the shallop shot out into what was certainly a very rough sea.

But she proved herself a splendid sea boat and went plunging along through the waves in fine style.

The fire in the little cook stove in the caboose was now lighted by the old skipper and a cup of hot coffee and a sandwich given to the two girls, who ate with a relish.

Jack Ross also ate heartily, while the skipper, Zeke, took the tiller, and when the young sailor went forward for a talk with Nick Norcross, he said:

"Leddies, does yer know thet lad are ther heartenest one I ever seen?"

"How so, Skipper Welby?" asked Pearl.

"Waal, jist look at ther run he made this night."

"It was wonderful, sir."

"It were a miracle, miss."

"And I have heard that you made a daring run into port in your vessel also, skipper?"

"It were jist a little boasting, miss, ter show ther Britishers they couldn't catch a live Yankee ef he were old and jaded."

"Yer see, I had no reason ter run for it, as I only had things ter eat aboard ter sell 'em, and folks said I hadn't oughter take provender ter ther enemy."

"But yer see I did thet ter git in, fer I had a purpose in goin' thar, though Lord love yer when I got in I jist seen ther thing couldn't be did."

"May I ask what it was?"

"Waal, miss, seein' as you is Amerikins, and I is out o' Bosting, I don't mind telling yer that a friend o' mine are thar in jail."

"I sailed with his pa years ago, and he were my best friend and give me a start in life, and the son, who were a lad then, jumped overboard one day, when I fell from the yard-arm and saved me from sinking, for I was hurted by my fall."

"So as thet same lad are in prison, I jist run

in ter see what I c'd do ter git him out, don't you see?"

"May I ask his name?"

"Noel Stanwood, miss."

"I am his sister, sir, and this very night have we left Boston in this shallop to try and save my poor brother."

"How strange, sir, that we should thus meet," said Ethel, holding out her hand, and as Jack Ross now came aft they all talked over the strange coincidence of being upon the very same service which had brought the old skipper in reality to Boston.

The old skipper seemed more than delighted at the chance of meeting Noel Stanwood's sister, and then, after hearing of the intention of the maidens, to visit General Washington and get him to dispatch vessels to capture the brig-of-war Sea Shadower, he remarked:

"I guess as how the general kin do it, and will; but has yer decided, ladies, how yer is ter git back inter Bosting, for not fer a thousand in Continental money would I have yer run ther same course in ag'in, though the lad here could do it, oh he could do it, after what I see him do to-night."

The idea of returning had not been taken into consideration by Pearl or Ethel.

To get to Washington's quarters was their desire, and after that they could see to getting back.

Then they regretted that they had not brought the pass of Mr. Rovere, and changed it as Pearl had suggested, for they could easily have passed back into the British lines with it.

In silence they looked at their brave young preserver, wondering what he thought of the return as they came, for it seemed, with this object accomplished, they would not have the courage to run such a gantlet again, though, like Skipper Zeke Welby, after what they had seen they did not doubt but Jack Ross would get them home in safety.

"I thought of the going back, miss, and my idea was that you better take some coaster in, going in a disguise I could rig up for you."

"Lad, you talk eddicated, for that's the idee exactly. Now when I run in with green stores and fresh meats for the Britishers in Bosting, they thought it were ter make an honest penny; but, as I told you, I had a big aim in view, only it did not pay out as I wanted."

"The Britishers wanted me to go ag'in and get a cargo, but feedin' them was not my legitimate business, so I was glad to sell out the shallop; while now I know what it were wanted for, I jist begs to return the money."

"Not a dollar of it, Skipper Zeke, for neither of us will hear to that," said Pearl, decidedly.

"Waal, m'am, I'll tell you my plan, and it are founded on ther lad's idee here of disguises."

"While you is in the patriot camp I kin run to a place I know and git a cargo of chickens, mutton, beef, pork and vegetables, for some poor patriots needs money, and the Britishers has got it."

"Then we kin start back, and you leddies and the lads kin go in disguises, while I goes as captaining when we sight Bosting."

"I'll make no secret of it, but run to ther frigate and tell 'em I has fresh feeding for 'em, and so on up to the town."

"But they may know that the shallop is the same that gave them such a chase to-night," suggested Nick Norcross.

"So be it if they does, and I'll jist tell 'em it are my way, as I wants ter keep ther guns from gittin' rusty, and ther sailors from goin' ter sleep on watch."

"Oh, we'll pass, we will; and if we should be held, why the leddies knows some big gun among ther Britishers they kin send for, and go in without making ther leetle v'lage public, don't you see?"

"You are a good plotter, Skipper Zeke, and your plan will work like a charm," said Jack Ross.

"Yes, and should the shallop be held, there is one British officer we can send for who can save us trouble, for I would not hesitate to tell him the truth, as he would never betray us," Pearl said.

"The skipper might, when hailed going in, state that he had a cargo of fresh provisions for the brig-of-war Sea Shadower," suggested Ethel, knowing that Pearl referred to Lord Erskine Enders as the one who would protect them.

"That be the craft that is fitting out to hunt for a ship's ghost, be'ant it?" asked Skipper Zeke.

"Yes, she is to sail in search of the Silver Ship, or its ghost, if so you wish to call it, Skipper Welby."

"Waal, leddies and lads, I has sailed the blue waters many a year, but I never wants ter run across that craft again."

"Again?" said all in chorus.

"Them is my words."

"You have seen the Specter Silver Ship then?" Pearl asked, with real interest.

"Yes, miss, and from the deck o' this very shallop."

"It were the night before I run inter Bosting Bay, and we was sailing slowly along when

suddenly we seen astern of us a large white brig."

"We was all skeert I kin tell you, but thar she come, and fast as yer knows this shallop to be, that white craft glided right by us."

"She wasn't nigh a quarter of a mile away and the night was starlight, the sea smooth and a six-knot breeze going."

"But she were making all of ten, and I seizes my trumpet and hails her."

"But no answering hail came and I had not the grit to do it ag'in for it did seem ter me like callin' on dead folks ter speak to me."

"So the shadow brig jist sailed on and went out o' sight in a fog-bank some half-hour after, and I never wants ter see her ag'in—"

"Sail, ho! Look thar!" and as old Skipper Zeke uttered the words he pointed toward a vessel that had hove in sight seemingly like a cloud from out the sea."

And the vessel looked strangely like the ghost of a brig, for it seemed hardly to be real.

CHAPTER XX.

A SPECTER OF THE SEA.

THE shallop had been holding upon her course, pointed for Bass Point, crossing the open sea between Deer Island and Nahant, a run of some five miles where she felt the full force of wind and wave from the ocean.

It was the object of Jack Ross to get the shallop out of the rough waters and fierce winds as soon as possibly by running for Bass Point on Nahant, and thus keeping close inshore to be under the lee of that remarkable peninsula which forms the sea wall, or arm, of Lynn Harbor.

The shallop was behaving well, but the cold was intense, the decks slippery with ice, and forward the bows of the craft were getting heavy from the spray freezing as it burst upon them.

The gale was from the eastward, by a point north, so Nahant would be a fine lee once the shallop got under its shelter, and, as near as he could guess in the darkness, Jack Ross was heading for Bass Point, with the hope of hitting in between there and Black Rock, at least.

So interested had all become in discovering in Skipper Zeke Welby an earnest ally in the rescue of Noel Stanwood, that not one of the three men had been on the lookout, as they otherwise would have been.

And again the piercing cold had made them all crouch close down in the roomy cockpit of the shallop, while the young skipper had resumed his heavy overcoat, and was taking it as comfortable, after the gantlet he had so daringly run.

So it was that just as Skipper Zeke had finished telling of his meeting with the Shadow Silver Ship, he had involuntarily cast his eyes out over the waters to behold the very object of his conversation.

Every eye was at once riveted upon the vessel at which he pointed, and Jack Ross instinctively let the shallop fall off several points, as though to give her a wider berth.

"It's a brig, or a ghost of one," said Nick Norcross, in a suppressed voice.

"It's the Shadow Silver Ship, for no other craft is like that," and the voice of the young skipper had lost some of its ring, showing that even he was deeply impressed with the sight.

"That's ther craft, folks," whispered Zeke, and he added:

"Speak out, if yer sees her, so as ter show that I hain't no liar—for I sees the Shadow Ship."

"That is certainly a weird, strange craft—a brig," Pearl said.

"It's a brig, miss, but they called the lost treasure craft, which was brig-rigged, the Silver Ship, and so this shadow or specter is also called so," explained Nick Norcross.

"What do you make of it, Captain Ross?" asked Ethel.

"That it is the strangest craft I ever set eyes on, Miss Stanwood."

"Do they see us?" whispered Pearl.

The strange craft was as white as snow, hull, spars and sails, and she was fairly surging along with the gale over her port beam, carrying considerable canvas for such a sea and wind.

She was to windward of the shallop, heading so as to pass within a couple of cables' length, and, but for the fact that Ross had let his bows fall off several points, she would have been much nearer.

She appeared to have run close inshore to Nahant, which was now not a mile distant.

"I shall hail her," suddenly declared Jack Ross, and loud, clear and ringing was his voice as he shouted:

"Aho! the brig! aho!"

Not a sound came in response, no creaking block was heard, and the strange craft was now dead ahead of the shallop.

"Ho, the Shadow Silver Ship aho! ab—o—y! a—h—o—y!" and the voice of Jack Ross, even in the teeth of the gale, would have been heard twice the distance.

But no answer came from the weird brig to the hail from the little shallop.

"Don't hail again, sir, pray do not," urged Pearl, awed by the sight of the strange craft and its flying by in such dread silence.

"Certainly not, miss."

"It will do no use— See that!"

As he spoke Skipper Zeke Welby pointed to the shadow craft, which suddenly wore up into the wind, and with her sails trimmed flat, without a sound of an order, the creaking of a block or fluttering of canvas, went dashing away directly out into the blackness of the tempest-swept sea.

For some minutes not a word was spoken by those upon the shallop, and then the silence was broken by Jack Ross with:

"See! there rises Nahant, and you notice we are running into quiet waters."

His words were a relief, and all gazed eagerly at the black outline which was now known to be Nahant, and was each moment becoming more and more ale to them.

Along sped the shallop, however, far enough off-shore to get the pressure of the gale upon her sails, though the sea no longer broke wildly about her.

An hour after, the two maidens, utterly worn out, were seated before a large blazing fire in a comfortable room of the tavern, eating a warm supper, while Jack Ross had already "turned in" also in pleasant quarters—Skipper Zeke and Nick Norcross having remained on board the shallop, as the old skipper said:

"To keep the Irish spy from gittin' lonesome." If there was anything which Mahone did wish just at that time it was to be lonesome.

He had made up his mind, when he saw Jack Ross visit the Revere mansion, that some mischief was up, and if he could discover a secret upon his young mistress, he would make her pay a round sum for him to keep it, and get more from Ethel, and the sailor, too.

So he had determined to play the spy, after he had been caught with his ear at the keyhole, for he was sure that it meant his discharge to be thus surprised.

Then he thought he might make a discovery, which his master, Prince Paul Revere, would be glad to know and pay for.

So it was that Mahone had started upon a spying expedition with no thought of taking a voyage, and the upshot of which voyage he had no means of even guessing, for he stood in holy awe of the young sailor.

"Keep him, Nick, until we return; and, Skipper Zeke, don't fail to meet us at the inlet near the farm-house you spoke of in Saugus River, for it will save us much time."

"We will leave the carriage to come on without us, while we await your coming there," said Jack Ross as he left the shallop, to accompany Ethel and Pearl ashore to the tavern in the little town, intending to make the journey to Washington's headquarters by vehicle.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PATRIOT CHIEF.

IT was a long way around to go to the headquarters of the patriot chief, who was not far distant in a straight line from the home of Pearl Revere; but then, to get through the British lines there had to be a reason for, and neither of the maidens cared to have the English commanders know that they entered the lines of the American Army.

For Pearl to have done so would surely have gotten her father, as an American, into serious trouble; while, with her brother in prison, and an avowed "rebel," Ethel and her mother would have been the sufferers.

So it was that they took the big chances of running out by boat, at night, and making a flank movement upon Washington's quarters via Lynn.

The two girls, after their terrible adventure and hardships of the night, retiring as they did shortly before dawn, were glad to sleep in their darkened room until called, and this Jack Ross did not allow until a late hour.

He, meanwhile, had secured a vehicle to carry them across country, and at noon aroused the two daring maidens and stated all was ready for their journey.

"And the shallop?" Pearl asked as she came into the breakfast room where a substantial meal was awaiting them.

"She has gone off already after a cargo, from the coast farms, miss."

"And Mahone?"

"Took the voyage in ther shallop."

"But what can we do with the unfortunate man?"

"Well, Miss Revere, my mate Nick frightened him into a confession that he meant to know what you were about and force money from you to keep the secret, and from Miss Stanwood too."

"How could he be so vile?" said Pearl indignantly.

"He was worse, for he meant to go to your father and if not well paid, to threaten to tell Lord Howe that he was acting as a spy, sending his dispatches through you."

"This seems incredible."

"But is true, and to take him back to Boston would just destroy all, so I will see that he goes on an extended cruise."

"You mean him no bodily harm?" quickly asked Ethel.

"Oh no, miss; but I can give him a chance to

cruise in an American privateer which is being fitted out in an inlet near to go into English waters and prey on the British merchantmen."

"Very well, that will not be so bad and he deserves really severe punishment," said Pearl, and half an hour after, entering the carriage in the rear yard of the tavern, to attract no attention, the three were driven away upon their way to the patriot camps.

The driver was told to take the stage-road from Salem to Boston as far as Powder House Hill, where they would branch off from the turnpike and seek the banks of the Mystic River above, where they had been told by the landlord of the tavern they would find a ferryman who had a boat in which he could carry them up to where a farmer dwelt on the Somerville shore of the river, and from thence they could make their way again by vehicle to the quarters of Washington, then near Cambridge.

The river was reached, and the ferryman soon had his boat ready, the driver of the vehicle being told to remain there until their return.

As it was sunset when they reached the farmhouse on the other shore of the Mystic River, the three adventurers decided to remain there until the following morning, when the farmer promised to drive them on to Washington's headquarters.

They were now where the ragged uniforms of the Continental soldiers were seen instead of the flashing costumes of the British, and though halted a score of times on the road, and by boats on the river, Jack Ross always received word to continue on his way, when he made the report:

"Two ladies to visit General Washington upon matters of importance."

The next morning the farmer, who had been given a note from his friend the landlord of the tavern at Lynn, and a promise of generous pay from Ross, had his wagon ready and started upon the way to the army camp.

As he made a weekly trip with provisions he knew the road well, and in good time was halted by the sentry at the headquarters camp, and soon after the three invaders of the patriot lines stood in the presence of the great chief who is now, a century after, known as the "Father of His Country."

Jack Ross saluted profoundly, and said: "General Washington, I am but an humble sailor, late in the Royal Navy, and serve only as an escort to these two ladies, who in confidence will tell you who they are and make known their mission."

"Is it not strange, sir, that a British sailor should present himself here in the American lines?" said General Washington somewhat sternly.

"I was a sailor, sir, as I wished you to understand, in the king's navy; but, I am an American, and when my vessel returned from a long voyage a few weeks ago, I left the ship with an honorable discharge, intending to seek service in the American Navy."

"Ah! I am glad to hear of such determination, sir; but let me now greet your companions," and the general walked over to where the two maidens stood awaiting his pleasure.

His kindly greeting emboldened Pearl Revere to at once give her name and that of her fair companion.

"Your name is well known to me, Miss Revere; and I now recall having met you and your father a year ago. I am glad to meet you again, and you also, Miss Stanwood. May I ask if you are a relative of the young American sailor, Noel Stanwood, whom a British military court has lately punished so severely, in spite of his valuable services, simply because he had the courage of his convictions to declare himself a patriot?"

"I am the sister of Noel Stanwood, General Washington, and it is to beg you to save him that we have come; but I had no idea that you knew of him?"

"Oh, yes; Captain Stanwood is too gallant a man for his light to be hid under a bushel, and we get news from our enemies in Boston in a roundabout way."

"And my father, General Washington, you must also know, is in sympathy with the British rule, though an American, while I am, as our rulers call us, a Rebel heart and soul," said Pearl.

"Yes, Miss Revere, I was pained to know that your father had cast his lot with the foes of his native land; but if he went as his convictions dictated none can blame him; but now tell me how it is that you expect me, a patriot commander, to save a prisoner under sentence of the British and in their power," and General Washington smiled, but added, quickly:

"First tell me, please, when you left Boston, and how did you reach our lines?"

Pearl Revere then told the story, from the waiting for Jack Ross up to their arrival at General Washington's headquarters.

Several times when, fearing she was tiring the chief, she said that she would avoid certain detail, the general said:

"No, no; I must know all."

And so he heard of even the attack of the dog upon Jack Ross, Mahone's conduct and capture

and the terrible gantlet they had run in Skipper Zeke's shallop.

"And so you were the cause of all that firing night before last, were you, young ladies?"

"You are indeed heroines, and I know not what to say in praise of your splendid pluck and the nerve and skill of our sailor friend here, Mr. Ross."

"You may be sure, Mr. Ross, that you will not be forgotten."

"It is my desire, General Washington, to let my country hear of me if I can only get on board of an American vessel-of-war, sir."

"I will see that you do, if you return here after having escorted your fair charges back to their homes."

"Oh, sir, I thank you," said the delighted sailor.

Then General Washington called for a staff officer to enter the room, and gave him certain instructions to attend to.

In half an hour the officer returned and made his report, and General Washington said:

"I am glad to report that there are three vessels available for the service of seeking to capture the brig, and word shall be sent to their respective commanders at once to prepare for sea, so, Mr. Ross, pray give me the exact tonnage, armament and crew of the Sea Shadower?"

This the young sailor did, and added:

"Pardon me, General Washington, but if not considered obtrusive, I would like to make a suggestion, sir."

"Certainly, Mr. Ross, I wish all the information, suggestions and advice I can get," said the chief with a smile.

"I wish to say, sir, that having sailed in the brig, when she was the Shark, that I know her to be a very fleet craft, and she will be faster now, as her topmasts have been lengthened, and new and longer spars have been given her, so that to capture her two vessels should be well apart and far out at sea in her course, and a third astern of her so as to catch her in a triangle between them, for she will be no easy craft to take."

"Your suggestion, Mr. Ross, is a good one, and I shall see that it is made to the commanders of the respective vessels, for we have not only to rescue Captain Stanwood; but capture so fine a craft as you state the Sea Shadower to be."

After some further conversation, General Washington was so convinced that the Sea Shadower would be a hard vessel to capture, that he decided to send another courier at once to New York, where an American vessel-of-war, once a fleet clipper ship, was almost ready for sea, and have her also lie in wait for the British brig.

Then, armed with a pass from General Washington, to give them safe and speedy permit through the American lines, the trio started upon their return, the general saying earnestly:

"Remember, Mr. Ross, you must use strategy in getting again into Boston with your charges, for no second time could you pass through in safety the gantlet you did in coming out."

"Permit me also to add that when you need an officer's berth upon an American vessel, you have my full permission to refer to me."

The face of the young sailor flushed with pride, and then they departed, delighted with their visit to the great chief, and with hope that the Sea Shadower would be taken ere she reached England with her prisoner.

CHAPTER XXII.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

THE morning after leaving the Continental Headquarters, the vehicle secured from the tavern landlord, drew up at a comfortable farmhouse upon the Saugus River, and some miles from where the stream emptied into Lynn Harbor.

It was to this place Skipper Zeke had directed Jack Ross to go, and they were warmly welcomed by the farmer who after the vehicle had driven on its way back to the tavern, told the visitors that the skipper of the shallop was then getting his stores on board so as to be ready to sail during the night, the shallop then being in hiding a couple of miles away in an inlet.

After a good supper at the farm-house, the party entered a boat and were rowed by the farmer to the hiding-place of the shallop, where they were warmly welcomed back by Skipper Zeke and Nick Norcross.

The maidens at once went into the cabin of the shallop, for they were very tired after their hard jaunt, while Jack set to work to help get ready for sea.

He saw a large vessel anchored near, and Skipper Zeke told him that it was a craft being fitted out secretly as a privateer, and added:

"They are waiting for her crew to arrive, lad, but I have shipped one man on board, though he won't do no work until she gets out to sea, bein' as he is ter be kept in irons."

"You mean Irish?"

"Yas, lad, that is the crittur I means, and he ought ter thank me, fer of course he'll git his grub and pay, and prize-money, too, if the schooner captures prizes, and maybe if she's captured by the Britishers he may git hung, for

they threatens ter hang all Americans afloat as pirats."

"Yes, but they will not dare to do that, Skipper Zeke; but how is she off for officers?"

"Maybe you c'd git a berth if yer come back arter the run into Bosting."

"It's a chance I'll bear in mind, skipper, if you'll introduce me to the captain, and I'd rather go as a foremast hand than not get to sea soon, for our country needs all the aid we can give her now."

"She does, lad, and we'll go over and see Captaining Dale, fer his name be Dan Dale, and I'll tell you confidential like I has a interest in the schooner, so my word goes for something."

"But you seen Washington, the gals tells me?"

"Yes, and he was most kind to me."

"Waal, waal! I'd give much to see him; but let me tell you right now that I want to give back the money you paid me for the shallop, for she's no good to the leddies arter we return, and I now know how I kin git out, by pretendin' ter run arter green food for 'em, don't yer see?"

"Come, I will hev it so, and I be no man to fool, and I jist swow I won't tech a dollar for what I has done for Captaining Noel, so here's the money and the shallop's mine."

"Keep it to see if we get in all right, for if taken you must not lose the craft."

"No, I'll take no risk, and so here is the cash."

Argument was useless, so Jack Ross had to take back the money and then the old skipper told him of the disguises he had for the whole party except himself to return in the shallop.

"Oh! they'll fit, and don't you forget it, lad, fer they is a lot o' things as belonged to some play actors that got wrecked on Nahant and Farmer Lewis, with whom yer took supper hed 'em stowed away, as I know'd, and got 'em from him to-day."

"But we'll go now and see Captaining Dale, for we has ne'er about got the cargo aboard, and I kin tell yer it will fetch big money, so the gals needn't feel bad fer fear I may lose suthing."

The visit to the privateer schooner was made and Captain Dale, a typical American sailor, fearless and determined, said he would be only too glad to have Jack Ross as second officer, for Skipper Zeke had told him of the run out of Boston Harbor, and he added that he would keep the berth open ten days for him.

"I'll tell you, captain, if I can I'll be back sooner, but try and get to sea before that time, say in six days, for the brig of war Sea Shadower sails for England in just ten days, and if you could help capture her it would be a big thing for the patriots."

"I'll try my best, thank you for the suggestion, Mr. Ross," was the reply of Captain Dale, and he made up his mind that he would try conclusions with the Sea Shadower, for he really had a well-armed, swift and fine schooner to take out under the flag of the new nation.

As the wind had switched around to the southeast, making it a beat to Boston, and they knew that the shallop would not arrive until morning, Jack Ross and Skipper Zeke decided to remain in the inlet all night and start the following day, for it was their desire to run up the harbor about twilight, or just before.

So word was given to Pearl and Ethel to turn in, and make themselves comfortable for the night, the three men occupying the steerage and which was by no means unpleasant quarters.

The next morning the shallop dropped down the Saugus and entering the open waters headed for Boston under a head wind blowing some seven knots.

With time to spare, and sailing splendidly, she rounded the group of islands at that time known as The Graves, ran down into Nantasket Roads, and with the wind over her port quarter, boldly headed up the bay.

The coast-guard schooner Ocean Outpost was descried far down toward Hingham Harbor, so nothing was to be feared from her, and the frigate British King had moved her position up off the city, while the brig-of-war Sea Shadower had dropped down the harbor and was anchored north of Spectacle Island.

She was about ready to sail, but the sloop-of-war having been sent to sea in chase of a vessel sighted off outer Brewster Island, and flying the "Gridiron Flag," the Sea Shadower had taken sentinel duty until her return, for the frigate had gone up to town to refit for a cruise to the Carolinas.

Upon the deck, pacing to and fro, with the air of one who was chief of all he surveyed, was Lieutenant Caspar Caldwell, the officer who had been so bitter against Noel Stanwood in his testimony.

A triumphant smile was upon his face, for the day before, when ordered to drop down to the brig's present anchorage, the lieutenant, who was the senior in rank, and after Lord Erskine's resignation, had been in command, had been taken seriously ill with fever, so that Caspar Caldwell found himself the Sea Shadower's captain, to his great joy and pride.

There was no possibility that his senior officer would be able to sail in the brig, so the admiral commanding the station had promoted him to a senior lieutenantancy, and told him that he should

command the brig in her cruise in search of the Shadow Silver Ship, but Lieutenant Bonair had been ordered to the brig as his first officer, a circumstance which Caldwell did not exactly like, but could not avoid.

Lord Erskine had sent all his baggage aboard, and had taken up his quarters already in the brig, as an honored passenger and dispatch bearer to the king, and what pleased Caldwell the more was the fact that Noel Stanwood had also been sent in irons to the brig, and was then below decks.

A certain rumor that the rescue of the prisoner from the jail might be attempted by the American populace in the town, had decided the commandant in placing him where he would be safe from rescue.

"Send Lieutenant Bonair to me, Mr. Bancroft," he said after a long look through his glass at a craft which was coming up the bay.

The junior lieutenant addressed obeyed and when Brainard Bonair came on deck, "Captain" Caldwell as he was now called by courtesy, holding the rank he did, said:

"Lieutenant Bonair, you were on the frigate the other night when that Yankee shallop ran out to sea?"

"Yes, sir."

"There comes a shallop up the bay now, and from the description I had given me of her by Captain Trigg of the guard-boat, I think that must be the infernal Yankee returning."

Lieutenant Bonair took the glass and after a short look through it said:

"Yes, sir, it is the very craft, for you know it was found out to have been the new shallop which an old Yankee skipper ran in some weeks ago with provisions, risking our fire just for mere bravado, though he said that he did not hear our firing upon him and too near blind to see."

"The accursed Yankees are full of tricks; but I shall bring that fellow to."

"Certainly, sir, and my word for it you will find him loaded down with fresh provisions, meat and vegetables, and just what we need to stow the brig with."

"Yes, I'll take his provisions and put him in irons for his running out the other night."

"Have a gun cleared to bring him to."

The order was obeyed and a moment after a shot was fired across the bows of the incoming shallop.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

THE shallop was some quarter of a mile away when the gun was fired from the brig, to bring her to, and at once she changed her course, which would have carried her some distance away from the Sea Shadower.

The change brought her directly toward the British vessel, and soon Captain Caldwell hailed:

"Ho the shallop."

"Ay, ay, capt'ing."

"Come up under my lee, and if you knock an ounce of paint off my brig I'll blow you out of the water."

"Ay, ay, capt'ing," was the undisturbed reply, and a moment after the shallop glided alongside of the brig and was made fast without even scraping the shining paint of the pretty war-craft.

Upon the deck of the shallop five people were visible, an old man at the tiller, weather-beaten and shrewd-faced, and seated in the cockpit was a white-haired woman, wearing large spectacles and knitting a stocking with all the composure in the world, in spite of its being a really cold day.

By her side sat a young girl, with an old-fashioned sun-bonnet on, and her face seemed a long way back in it, and yet looked fresh and pretty, while a mass of fiery red curls hung down her back.

Both were plainly but neatly dressed, and the young girl was winding a ball of yarn.

Forward, ready to obey the orders of the old skipper, were two young sailors, of the half-farmer, half-seaman style, for they wore top-boots, pea-jackets and worsted caps pulled down over their ears and foreheads.

Their faces were not of the cleanest, and they did not appear to be very bright specimens of youthful manhood, as they stood gazing up at the brig with open-mouthed wonder.

"Well, sir, who and what are you?" demanded Captain Caldwell, sternly, as he looked down on the group upon the deck of the shallop.

"If yer means who I be, I'm proud to tell yer I be Skipper Zeke Welby, o' Kennebec; but if yer means who ther craft be, it are the Kennebec shallop Honey Bee, bound inter Bosting with a cargo o' fresh beef, mutton, pigs, poultry, eggs, potatoes, turnips and sich garden truck as you Britishers is hungry fer jist now, seein' as General George Washington has got yer in a tight corner."

"Well, your cargo is welcome, but not your observations about that arch-rebel, Washington."

"But who else have you aboard?"

"My old lady, Jemima Welby, darter Patience Ann, and them two gawk lads as don't know beans when ther bag be opened, ef yer

jedges 'em by your Bosting chaps, though they be'ant sich durned fools as they looks."

A laugh greeted Skipper Zeke's words about the crew of his shallop, and then Captain Caldwell asked:

"Is not this the shallop that ran in a few weeks ago under fire?"

"It be."

"You were her skipper then?"

"I are the man, capt'ing."

"I thought it was said you were very deaf?"

"My hearin' have improved pretty smart."

"I guess so; but why did you take such chances when you had provisions to sell to the British?"

Skipper Zeke laughed and replied:

"Waal, I had a new boat, and so I jist wanted ter see what she'd do."

"Then I be a Yankee, and so thought I'd jist give the Britishers a stir up."

"And this is the same craft that ran out three nights ago under fire?"

"Did yer see her, capt'ing?"

"My officers did."

"Didn't she go like a streak o' greased lightning?"

"You admit this was the craft then?"

"Of course it were the Honey Bee."

"And what was your purpose?"

"Waal, capt'ing, I made a good thing in king's gold by my last run, and so I concluded I'd git another cargo, but they wouldn't let me go out, so I jist took chances, and here I is ag'in with beef, mutton, fowls, turnips, water—"

"Silence, sir, and let me tell you that I confiscate your cargo and shall put you in irons," savagely said Caldwell, who felt that the Yankee was inwardly laughing at him.

"See here, capt'ing, this be my boat, paid for with my money, and when I do be friendly to you Britishers to bring in provisions and keep you from starving you talks about taking my craft and putting me in irons."

It was evident that Captain Caldwell meant to do just as he said, for his was a mean nature, and by confiscating the cargo it cost him nothing out of his own pocket for provisions, and as he had the authority, or rather the power, he could keep the skipper under his guns until he got ready to sail, or send the shallop up to town as a prize, he having captured the fleet craft which had set the whole British force ashore and afloat, in alarm a few nights before.

"Oh, sir, you will not let him do this cruel act, you, sir, whom I recognize now as Lord Erskine, who was at our house once?"

Lord Erskine Enders had come on deck and been a silent observer of all that had occurred.

Now, as he was addressed by name, he started and gazed fixedly into the face of the speaker, whom the skipper had said was his daughter, Patience Ann Welby.

"Well, I declar, be you Lord Erskine Enders arter all?"

"I do recognize you now, sir, and you hain't the one to let that upstart young officer put my old man in irons."

It was the "old woman" who spoke now, and again Lord Erskine started, his face flushed, and he said quickly:

"Ah yes, my good friends, I recall you now," and turning to the brig's commander he continued:

"Caldwell, I will be responsible for these people, so get what provisions you need and let the shallop go on her way."

"Parlon me, my lord, but I cannot do so."

"And why, sir?" and Lord Erskine's eyes brightened with anger.

"I may be held responsible for them," Caldwell replied.

"But I will be responsible for them, I said."

"That does not please me, so I will hold them and their craft."

"Do you decline, sir, upon your own responsibility?"

"My lord, I am in command of this brig, you but a passenger, and—"

"Hold! sir! Are you aware that my resignation was accepted at my own option to give up my command, or not?"

"You also must know, sir, that I rank you, holding as I do the king's commission of captain, and I shall take the responsibility of at once relieving you from duty, if you will to test your power against mine?"

Caspar Caldwell winced under the words of the nobleman, who he knew would not assert that the option to resign or resume his command of the brig was left with him, unless it was so, and he hastily said:

"I beg your pardon, my lord, but I thought your resignation of the captaincy of the brig was decided, so I said what I did."

"Then permit me to tell you that if it is my pleasure to resume command of this brig at any time from now until she sails from England in search of the lost Silver Ship, I can do so, as you will be informed by inquiry of the admiral."

"But I desire to say nothing of this for your sake, unless forced to do so."

"Again I ask pardon, my lord."

"And is my guarantee for this shallop and her crew to be taken, sir?"

"Certainly, my lord."

"Thank you, and I beg that you get what pro-

visions you need at once, for I shall sail up to the town in the shallop as I wish to protect these good people from being again molested, and more, secure a permit for the skipper to leave port at will for other provisions, which our forces certainly need most sadly."

Caspar Caldwell bit his lips viciously, but gave orders to an officer to purchase all needed fresh supplies, and get them aboard.

And right there did Skipper Zeke get in his quiet little revenge by charging double the price he had intended to for his "green goods," as he called his cargo.

After an hour's delay the shallop cut loose in the gathering twilight, and Lord Erskine was upon her deck as she moved toward the city.

"I suppose you know that I recognize you both now," he said quietly, as he took a seat in the cockpit.

"Yes, my lord, and we owe you a debt no thanks of ours can ever repay," earnestly said Ethel Stanwood, who was masquerading as "Darter Patience Ann."

"No, you have saved us from more than we can tell," and the "Old Lady Welby" spoke now in the full, rich tones of Pearl Revere.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TRUE AS STEEL.

FOR some moments after the words of thanks to Lord Erskine Enders, no word was spoken, and then he it was who broke the silence.

He did not wish to refer to their strange and incomprehensible situation, in disguise and on a coasting shallop, bound into port, as he did not know just who Skipper Zeke was, or how far he and the two young men could be trusted, and he was anxious not to compromise his own dignity in the matter.

So he said:

"I presume you have had a pleasant voyage, though it was but a short one."

"Well, as to the pleasure, my lord, I can not speak; but we had what we deem a successful voyage," replied Pearl, for Ethel remained silent.

"You do not mean to say that you were in this shallop when she ran out the other night through fire and tempest?"

"Yes, we were upon her," was the smiling reply.

"I have heard it spoken of as the most daring gantlet that any craft could run and live through it. Certainly it was a fearful ordeal for you to pass through, young ladies."

"The excitement kept us up, my lord."

"Well, let me congratulate your skipper here upon a nerve and skill that was wonderful."

"See here, stranger, I hain't a man to wear no duds that don't belong to me, and though I thanks you all the same, and admires you as one o' the squarest Britishers as ever served a king, I'll say that that young lad there, Master Jack Ross, are the man as did that gantlet-running," said Skipper Zeke.

"Ah! that accounts for the voice then, for I was with Captain Trigg in his guard-boat when you passed."

"So you are the hero, sir?"

"Yes, my lord, I am Jack Ross, late boat-swain on the Shark, and to whom you were always most kind, sir."

"I would not re-ship because I am an American, and I gave up my prize-money and went ashore, unwilling longer to serve against my own people."

"I honor you for it, Ross, and I congratulate you as a hero, for few men could do what you did that night."

"It would get you an officer's berth in the Royal Navy did you care to remain, and your deed of daring but carried out the idea I had formed of you."

"There is something behind your being an ordinary sailor, Jack Ross."

The face of the young sailor flushed crimson, but he made no reply, and Lord Erskine continued:

"I think, now that penetrating disguises is in order, that I can trace the face of Coxswain Nick Norcross under that innocent countenance, also a sailor of the Shark when I was her lieutenant?"

"Yes, my lord, I am Nick Norcross, ex-coxswain, and I also being an American, left the service just as Mate Jack did," said Nick frankly.

"I congratulate you all upon your disguises, and are fain to ask if Skipper Zeke here is his natural self, or also in disguise?" said Lord Erskine with a smile.

"He's his nat'ral self, my lord, for I calls yer so 'cause others does, though jist why a man should be called by ther same name as ther Great Jehovah my dear old mother taught me to pray to long ago, the Lord only knows why; but, here I is, old Zeke Welby, from Kennebec, owner o' this leetle craft, Honey Bee, and at present sarvin' on board as helmsman, the lad Jack being captain, sir, at your service eternally."

Lord Erskine saw that he had discovered a character in Skipper Zeke, and he knew that it was just such honest, independent, plucky material as he was made of, that was going to make the Colonies free from English rule, for he was one of the few who looked ahead.

He made no comment as to why the young ladies were on the shallop and in disguise, but said:

"Well, Skipper Zeke, I will secure for you a pass to take your vessel out again without having to run such a deadly gantlet as you did coming in some weeks ago and going a few nights since."

"Thank you, my lord; but I guess it's better for Skipper Zeke to take no passes, and when they see he has come in again with a cargo of provisions for 'em, the Britishers won't git in the way o' my going out for another, I guesses."

"Not unless they see a deeper design under your going in and out than to bring in provisions, but I'll see to it that you are not molested, for there will be some such feeling felt against you as was shown by Lieutenant Caldwell to-day, for creating the disturbance you did the other night."

"I thank you, my lord, and I'll git out o' port soon as I kin, for it do begin to grow a trifle cloudy for the shallop, I guesses."

"And, Ross, let me suggest that you and Norcross take a berth on the brig."

"The Shark, my lord?"

"That was, now the Sea Shadower."

"I do not wish to serve the king, my lord, nor does Nick here."

"Very well, I merely offered the suggestion."

"She sails for England in just six days now, and I can arrange for you to ship for the voyage across if you like, for I go in her as a passenger."

"I regret having had to humiliate Lieutenant Caldwell as I did awhile since, but he was running over with pride and meant to hold the shallop, which could but end in the discovery that four persons on board were masquerading, and hence I acted as I did."

"Miss Revere, I called to see you yesterday and was told that you were visiting Miss Stanwood, so I went to your home, Miss Ethel, to be told by old Lucy that you were away from home for the day."

"Miss Revere, there is some anxiety felt at your home for the butler, Mahone, who has mysteriously disappeared."

Both Ethel and Pearl felt that Lord Erskine, in a quiet way, took pleasure in teasing them and knew more than he would really admit, so Pearl said:

"Lord Erskine, can I trust you with a secret?"

"I never betray a secret, Miss Revere, but is it not best that I should not know it?"

"I would feel better to tell you the truth, you have been so more than kind to us."

"No, let me remain in ignorance, please, at least for the present," and the look on the face of the nobleman convinced Pearl that he meant what he said, so she answered:

"Just as you deem best, my lord."

The twilight was now beginning to cast the bay and city into obscurity and a guard-boat was seen putting out to head the shallop off, the Castle paying no attention to the little vessel as she had been seen to run alongside the brig.

As the guard-boat reached the shallop the officer in command hailed sharply:

"Ho that shallop! come to and give an account of yourself or I will fire into you."

Lord Erskine arose and answered the hail with:

"Aboy the guard-boat!"

"There is no need of harsh measures, sir, for did you not see that the brig brought the shallop to?"

"I am Lord Erskine Enders, sir."

The officer's tone and manner changed at once, and he said:

"I humbly beg pardon, my lord, but I thought I recognized the craft that gave us such a chase a few nights ago."

"It is all right, sir," and the shallop held on her way to a secluded anchorage off the hill on which stood the cottage of Widow Stanwood.

"Make your quarters on the shallop for a few days, Ross, you and Norcross, and you will be safe, for Skipper Zeke and his crew will be protected."

"Now place those ladies and their luggage ashore, and I will accompany them."

This was done and in the darkness Lord Erskine and the two young girls made their way up to the cottage, where their coming made Mrs. Stanwood happy beyond expression as she had lived in the most dreadful suspense since their departure, having known that the firing and tempest was faced by the little shallop in its flight.

CHAPTER XXV.

LORD ERSKINE LEARNS A SECRET.

WHEN Widow Stanwood had recovered from her emotion at the return of her daughter and Pearl, she told the latter that half a dozen servants had come from the Revere Mansion to see her, as all was excitement on account of the mysterious disappearance of Mahone, the butler.

He had put on his great-coat for a walk, he said, as no one of the mansion was to be at home, and he had not returned since, and all search for him had been unavailing.

He had been supposed, so thought the other

servants, to have been seized by the press-gang and taken on board some vessel-of-war to serve as a sailor.

Mrs. Stanwood had explained Pearl's not being at the cottage, when the messengers came, as best she could, and she added:

"What I was to say to-morrow I could not guess, and I am so glad that you are home again, Pearl, as the servants might have grown suspicious."

We will, with Lord Erskine's consent, press him into service after tea, and walk over to the mansion, so that I can allay any suspicion of the servants," said Pearl.

"I am wholly at your service, Miss Revere," assured the nobleman, and as the widow left the room to get tea, she having entertained Lord Erskine while the maidens were reversing their disguises and changing back to their sweet selves, Pearl now said:

"My lord, I saw that you did not wish me to tell you before Ross and the others, what both Ethel and I deem it now our duty to make known to you, in explanation of our very remarkable adventure, as it must appear in your eyes."

"No, I have no right to know, and my confidence in Miss Revere and Miss Stanwood is so great that I have no suspicion regarding their actions."

"You are most kind to say so; but we will tell you the truth; and as it is in confidence, and rests between we three, there will be no danger of being betrayed, or of your being compromised by hearing our secret."

"Remember, I am a British officer, and tell me nothing you are not perfectly willing I should know."

"We are not treating you as a British officer, my lord, but as Captain Erskine Enders, our warm friend, such as you have proven yourself to be."

"Then as Lord Enders I will hear your secret, and so consider Captain Enders not present," was the smiling reply, and he added:

"I could not permit you to compromise yourselves, in admitting my knowledge of your affairs, before others, or to compromise me as a British officer, by telling me your secret, and so I checked you in the shallop somewhat rudely, perhaps."

Well, my lord, I wish to tell you that, with every confidence in you, your influence, and willingness to aid in the pardon of Captain Stanwood, as you have suggested that after all it might hang upon the humor of the king, we decided to try another plan for the rescue of Noel."

"Just as I felt once," was the quiet remark.

"The sailor—in this in confidence, remember, as to others named, also."

"Certainly."

Jack Ross came to see Ethel to propose a plan for Captain Stanwood's rescue, and, as it would cause bloodshed we would not listen to it; but we decided to get his aid in a plan we had formed ourselves, which seemed feasible, and that was the capture of the brig on her run to England."

Lord Erskine smiled, and Pearl asked:

"You do not believe it can be done?"

"I think it impossible; but let me hear your whole plan."

Then he heard of Jack's coming to the mansion, his conquering the immense brute savage and the Irish spy, Mahone, and the plan that had been decided upon.

"The coming of the shallop, capture of Mahone by Jack Ross, and the running of the fearful gantlet was all told, as afterward the trip to the headquarters of Washington, after the discovery of the fact that Skipper Zeke had run into Boston for the very purpose of trying to rescue Noel Stanwood, and would not accept a dollar in money for his services, and handed back the money paid him for the shallop."

"You Americans are made of the right material, from high to low," said Lord Erskine.

"The king will discover that truth also," said Pearl, with a wicked look.

"His Majesty possesses the knowledge already, Miss Revere, and is made wiser every day. I predict the freedom of America, conquered by force of arms, for I know your people; but what a little rebel you are and your father so loyal," and Lord Erskine returned the wicked look of Pearl with interest.

"Yes, I am a sad rebel, I guess, and papa, well, he sticks to the king, so we never discuss politics."

"If he knew what his hopeful daughter had been about the past few days, he would go mad, I fear."

"But the deed is done, and I must tell you just what it is."

"You saw Washington, then?"

"Yes, for I had met him before, and always liked the splendid-looking calm-faced Virginian, and now I do not wonder that he is the idol of the American Army."

"I also admire him, Miss Revere, and he will be a great man before this revolution comes to an end, for I do not believe that the struggle is to be a short one. What said the commander-in-chief of you rebels?"

"We told him that the brig was to sail on a

certain date, and asked if he could not send several vessels of war to intercept her."

"Ah? you said several?"

"Yes, for we had an idea of what the capabilities of the brig are, for you remember Jack Ross was along."

"Yes, and as you said several vessels there may be the trifle of a possibility that the brig may be taken, but I doubt it."

"Yet why?"

"In the first place there is no better equipped vessel afloat in the way of battery, small-arms and munitions of war. She has a large crew, and now that Bonair is her first luff, a full complement of officers, and the men were picked for a special purpose, you know, so are not easily alarmed at a force even superior. Again, her old topmasts were replaced by others some ten feet longer, and her bowsprit is a dozen feet greater in length than the old one, her bows and gaff being also increased at the same proportion, as also her squaresail yards, which allows her to spread one-third more canvas than she did, and she was a very fleet craft then, as you have heard."

"The stern, which dragged water a little before, has been changed; so that helps her speed, and her bows have been sharpened, I may say until they are almost like a knife-blade."

"Such a craft, you see, will be able to run away from any vessel she cannot whip."

"You do not give us much hope."

"As you say several vessels are to go, then they may entrap her."

"Remember, your name was given, my lord, as one to be set free in case of her capture—to be sent, in fact, directly on to England and landed with all your belongings."

"This was our stipulation, and such were the instructions. Washington gave the different captains, for we told him the sad errand that carried you abroad, and he said that he remembered your father pleasantly in the French and Indian wars, when he was colonel of dragoons, and had been a dashing officer and splendid comrade."

"He asked if you were not like him?"

"He was most kind to speak thus of my father."

"He did not tell you that when my father fell wounded from his horse, he risked his life to bear him from the field?"

"No, he said nothing of this, my lord."

"That showed his modest nature; but it is true, and the name of George Washington of Virginia has ever been a treasured one in our home in England," and the young noble spoke with deepest feeling.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LORD ERSKINE GIVES A HINT.

"I MUST say, Miss Revere, that I more than appreciate the kindness of yourself and Miss Stanwood, in having provided for my escape and comfort, in case the brig is captured, and I thank you."

"It was our duty, my lord, after all you have done for Captain Stanwood."

"Well, many would not have so considered it, or even thought of it; but would it not compromise me with my own people, when the facts become known?"

"We thought of that, and spoke to General Washington about it, and he said that the order should be to protect you, as a passenger on the brig."

"Ah, ever generous; but now let me tell you, that as I seem to have dashed your hopes down as far as the capture of the Sea Shadower is concerned, let me raise them by simply giving you a hint."

"We are all attention, my lord, and will take a hint with more than pleasure," Ethel said naively.

"I only wish to say that should the American privateers not capture the brig, I hardly believe that Captain Noel Stanwood will ever land in England."

"More I cannot say; but I wish you to use your influence with both Jack Ross and Norcross to have them go to-morrow and ship on board the brig."

"A British vessel?"

"Yes, and I ask it as a special favor to Captain Stanwood, so that they may be near him."

"Now beg them to do this, but they must not know that I urge it, and more, you can promise that they will not be the sufferers."

"This is all I will say, more than that you must have hope."

Mrs. Stanwood now entered to announce tea, and both Ethel and Pearl felt impressed with what Lord Erskine had given as a hint.

After tea the three walked over to the Revere Mansion, and the servants seemed greatly relieved by the sight of their mistress, whose continued absence they could not understand.

At the request of Pearl, Lord Erskine went to the butler's room, which had been kept securely locked by the housekeeper, and a short examination showed that the butler was certainly given to thieving, as certain pieces of silver plate, from old sets never used, were hidden away in out-of-the-way places, and there was a sum of money also which Pearl remembered that her father thought had been stolen, with the silver, by

burglars who were supposed to have broken into the house one night.

Mahone then was the pretended burglar, and more, it was shown that he was in the pay of Merchant Frank Farley, to glean all the information he could regarding Pearl and her intimacy with Ethel Stanwood.

"Lock the door and leave the things for my father to see upon his return," Pearl had ordered, and then she added in a low tone to Ethel:

"I have no sympathy now for the fellow, and he deserves his fate.

"He will not dare come back here again, knowing our discovery, and we are well rid of him."

"And it is better to let them believe, as they now do, that he is a victim of the Press Gang," Ethel returned.

"Far better," and telling the housekeeper that she would remain several days longer at the cottage with Ethel, Pearl left her elegant home to the care of the servants, and returned in company with her devoted friend and Lord Erskine.

Mrs. Stanwood then told of her visit to her son in the prison, and that he was hopeful and bade her not despond, while he had inquired particularly after his sister, Pearl and Lord Erskine.

Another visit to him, however, had been prevented by his having been sent from the prison on board the brig, but Lord Erskine told her that he would see that she and also Ethel should see him to say farewell before the brig sailed.

Soon after he took his leave and looked in at the Military Club to see if any late news of importance had been received, and found the whole place in an uproar of excitement, over the fact that an hour before the mysterious craft known as the Silver Ship, or its Shadow, had run into Nantasket Roads, as far as Beacon Island, and after putting about had headed out to sea.

Several vessels coming in had been overhauled and passed by the fleet Shadow, and when she put about she had stood by and on out to sea, answering no hail, and with her crew seemingly not conscious of the existence of another craft near.

She had not passed up the harbor to where she could get a view of the Sea Shadower at anchor, but had been seen by the armed schooner Ocean Outpost, which had been just north of Hangman's Island, and the little cruiser had crowded on sail and gone in pursuit of the sea mystery.

"There is something strange about this craft after all, for what can she be?" mused Lord Erskine as he made his way down to the South Battery, where he had told the coxswain of the brig to meet him.

The boat was there, and having reported the fact at headquarters that Skipper Zeke, of the Honey Bee had meant no harm to the king in running his shallop in and out of the bay as he had, but was simply an eccentric old Yankee skipper, he ordered the coxswain to steer for the shallop.

Skipper Zeke was aboard, having just dropped anchor after a run to the frigate British King and the sloop-of-war, on board of which he had sold all his cargo.

The two sailors were also on the shallop, still looking like simple country lads, and Lord Erskine, going into the cabin told Skipper Zeke that the best thing he could do was to ship a couple of seamen to help him man the shallop and run out the next day, or even that night.

"As for you, Jack, and Norcross, Miss Stanwood wishes to see you up at the cottage, and so under no circumstances must you leave the town, and my best wishes attend you, for I know that you will do as Miss Ethel deems best."

Then turning to Skipper Zeke, he continued:

"Now, skipper, I wish your report, and those of Ross and Norcross regarding the seeing of the Shadow Silver Ship, which the ladies told me you saw the night you ran out?"

"Yer shall have it, capting, jist as I seen her," and the skipper told his story, which the two young men corroborated in every particular.

"She is a mystery indeed, and some day it must be solved," and shaking hands in good-by with all three Lord Erskine returned to his boat and was rapidly rowed down the bay to the brig.

Captain Caldwell greeted him upon his return, for he was nervously anxious, for fear that he might be relieved of duty, and he knew that a word from Lord Erskine would cut off his head, figuratively speaking.

"My lord, I hope, sir, you did not deem it necessary to make any report of my rude conduct toward you this afternoon?" he said, apologetically.

"No, Captain Caldwell, I never hold ill-will, and my rebuke of your conduct ended the matter as far as I am concerned.

"I hear that the Silver Ship was seen down the bay?"

"Yes, my lord, but without orders I dared not go in chase."

"You were right, sir; but we sail within a few days now and then your chance will come

to win fame as a commander of what I believe to be the fleetest and best appointed vessel afloat.

"Good-night, Captain Caldwell," and Lord Erskine descended to the cabin, leaving Caspar Caldwell delighted at the fact that his words had been overlooked, but just in the same ratio of joy at his escape from being relieved from duty on the brig, was his increased hatred of the man who had been too honorable to censure him to his superiors.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A SAILOR'S PLEDGE.

It was a cause of great congratulation to both Ethel and Pearl, to discover that their absence from the town had not been known out of the cottage and to those who had gone upon the shallop with them.

They sent old Bennett after breakfast the next morning, down to find where the shallop lay and to ask Jack Ross and Norcross to call at the cottage that evening.

Bennett returned with the information that the shallop had sailed at dawn, so he had gone to the former quarters of Jack Ross and found him there, so had delivered the message and the two sailors would call after dark.

It was a pleasure to know that old Skipper Zeke had put to sea, and had gone without creating any such an excitement as his first coming in and running out before had done.

The brig could be seen lying at anchor down the bay, and the talk of the town was, so said Bennett, the appearance in Nantasket Roads the night before of the Specter Ship.

"She ran right in like a ghost, took a look at the brig which was fitted up to capture her, and then put to sea again, her crew beckoning to the Sea Shadower to follow her out into the ocean."

Such was old Bennett's story, as he had heard it, and he also stated that there was the most intense excitement in the town about the appearance of the Shadow Ship in the offing, and wonder that the brig had been afraid to pursue her.

People were talking about the brig already, and her officers and crew, and commenting that if Lord Erskine had been in command he would have at once given chase to the ghostly craft.

The action of the commander of the schooner-of-war Ocean Outpost was highly commended, for he had, with his small vessel and a crew of half a hundred men, gone at once in pursuit.

But the Ocean Outpost had not been seen since, and many predicted that he never would be again, for it was certain destruction to a craft, and death to the crew, to follow an ocean phantom.

Thus the day passed, and soon after nightfall a boat landed on the shore near the cottage of Widow Stanwood, and two persons went up to the little house.

They were Jack Ross and Nick Norcross, and they were at once ushered into the parlor, where the maidens met them as they might old friends.

"The shallop has gone?" said Pearl, inquiringly.

"Yes, Miss Revere. After the visit of Lord Erskine to the shallop last night, Skipper Zeke concluded it would be safer for him to sail for home and thus be sure of saving his vessel, so I got him a couple of Portland lads who were in hiding from the British press-gang, and the Honey Bee flew away at dawn, presumably to bring in another cargo of fresh provisions, but I do not think Skipper Zeke will return again, until General Washington drives Lord Howe out of the town."

"And what had Lord Erskine to say to you, Jack?"

"He wished us all good luck, miss, and bade us farewell, for he sails on the brig, you know."

"Yes, and both Ethel and I have a great favor to ask of you and Nick Norcross."

"Granted, of course, Miss Revere, and for both of us, for Nick will not say no."

"Not I," said Nick, warmly.

"But you do not know how much we are going to ask of you?"

"It cannot be more than to run the gantlet again, which we are ready to do on call."

"You may think it a harder task."

"You know I said granted for both of us, Miss Revere, so you have but to say what it is."

"To ship on the Sea Shadower for the cruise to England."

Both the sailors started at the bold proposition.

"It is a king's ship, Miss Revere and Miss Stanwood?"

"Yes, and Captain Stanwood goes on it as a prisoner, and you can ship for the run to England only, for Lord Erskine can arrange that for you."

"Should the privateers capture the brig, then you will be already on board to ship in the new service, and of course Captain Stanwood, to whom both Ethel and I will write, getting you to secretly give him the letters, can clear you of having been there for other purpose than to save him."

"If the the privateers do not capture the brig, then you will be in England when he is, and his friends, you may aid him to escape, for I will

place in your hands one thousand five hundred pounds, which will go a long way toward aiding his escape, especially where it will not be thought that he has friends.

"Then you three together can enter the service of the patriots, once Captain Stanwood is free."

"Had I not given my promise, Miss Revere, your pleading and able argument in favor of our going, would have decided us, for I know Nick will go if I do."

"I am with you, mate, so do not consider me in your pledges worth referring to," was the answer of Nick Norcross.

"Then you will ship on the brig?"

"Yes, Miss Revere, we will watch for the first boat that comes up in the morning, and return in her to ship for the cruise, and if they will not take us for that only, we'll make it a year, for the war, or eternity, and let them hold us if they can after we drop anchor in the Thames."

"You mean that you would desert?"

"Certainly, for we are not going to serve the king but Captain Stanwood."

"It seems terrible to ask so much of you," said Ethel.

"It is little enough I assure you, Miss Ethel, and the captain of the brig will regret it more than we do."

"But may not Lord Erskine, seeing us aboard, be suspicious?" asked Nick.

"Well, if he is, he is too good a friend of Captain Stanwood to say a word, I can vouch for that, if he was certain we shipped only to rescue him," rejoined Jack Ross.

As no entreaty could force either Ross or Norcross to touch a dollar for themselves, Pearl was forced to yield to their wishes and place in their keeping twelve hundred pounds to be used for the rescue of Noel Stanwood.

Then farewells were said, and the brave sailors took their leave, and the next sunset found them on the brig's books as "first-class seamen, shipped for the cruise of the brig Sea Shadower in search of the mysterious vessel known as the Shadow Silver Ship."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE SEA SHADOWER SETS SAIL.

THE excitement about the appearance of the Shadow Silver Ship off the harbor did not abate in Boston in the least, as several days passed by and the little schooner did not return.

The Americans were pressing the siege more closely each day, and that also was cause for excitement, and the British began to feel that the "rebels" were by no means foes to be despised.

More help had been expected from England, but it had not come, provisions were few and high-priced, and the British knew that they were in a city where their enemies outnumbered them in spite of the fact that Lord Howe had over ten thousand soldiers and a fleet under his command.

The British general had expressed the situation fully in his dispatches to England, which Lord Erskine was to be the bearer of on board the fleet brig Sea Shadower.

The day before the sailing of the brig the cutter, manned by four oarsmen, landed at the little pier near the Stanwood cottage and Lord Erskine sprung ashore and ascended the hill.

In a short while he returned with three ladies, all closely veiled, and giving them seats in the cutter it pulled for the brig, which had now come up to an anchorage off the town to take on her last supplies.

Reaching the brig Lord Erskine aided the ladies to the deck and led them into the cabin where he left them with the remark:

"He shall come hither at once."

A moment after, with the clanking of chains, Noel Stanwood entered the room, accompanied by two marines who remained standing at the companionway until Lord Erskine appeared and ordered them to await on deck, and the prisoner was alone with his mother, sister and Pearl Revere.

Half an hour after the ladies came from the cabin, the marines took the prisoner once more in charge and Lord Erskine escorted the visitors to the deck. Captain Caldwell not being visible, for he had wisely decided to go ashore at the time of the visit, leaving Lieutenant Bonair in charge of the deck, and who was greeted by Mrs. Stanwood and the two maidens with real friendship.

Lord Erskine had accepted Mrs. Stanwood's invitation to return and have supper with them, as it was the last night in port, after which he had promised Lord Howe to call and get his latest dispatches before going aboard the brig, which was to sail with the early morning tide.

Upon the deck both Jack Ross and Nick Norcross were visible, but not a sign showed that they knew the visitors any more than did any of the rest of the seamen.

As they were about to depart, Lieutenant Bonair said:

"Delay a moment, my lord, and see what the schooner has to say for herself, for yonder comes the Ocean Outpost."

There, not half a mile away, was visible the schooner known as the Bay Guard, and which had gone in chase of the Shadow Silver Ship.

All awaited anxiously her approach, and when she was in hail, Lieutenant Bonair called out:

"Aho! the Outpost!"

"Ay ay, sir!"

"Ah, Turpin, that is you, is it? But where is the Shadow Ship?"

"Bonair, that craft is not made of wood and iron, but 's a specter."

"She sailed ahead of me, just out of range, and at night fairly haunted me until I put back on account of the impression she made on the men."

"I'll anchor near and come aboard to tell you all about it to-night, and also I wish to let you know that I was chased by two rebel privateers, so look out for them, as they are in your track," and the Ocean Outpost passed on to her anchorage.

The maidens and Lord Erskine exchanged looks that meant much, at the report of the rebel cruisers, and then took their departure from the brig, and escorting them home, it was nine o'clock before the nobleman arose to leave the cottage.

He bade farewell to Mrs. Stanwood, telling her to have every hope of her son's being pardoned by the king, grasped Pearl's hand warmly, and did not release his grip upon the tiny hand of Ethel until she had gone with him to the outer door.

"Ethel, I have only to ask you if one day I may come back to see you, whether my duty to my king calls me here or not?"

Her lips parted, and a word was uttered that few could have caught.

But Lord Erskine heard it, and said fervently:

"God bless you, Ethel, and I will come."

Then he was gone, and Ethel Stanwood felt that she was beloved by the man whom she had made her hero and her idol.

The next morning the girls arose early, for the roar of cannon from the harbor shook the town, and going out upon the little pine-clad hill-top, they beheld the Sea Shadower moving majestically toward the open sea.

She was crowded with canvas, white as snow, from deck to truck, and with a stiff off-shore breeze flew down the harbor, saluting the frigate British King, the schooner, sloop-of-war and the Castle, while she received hearty cheers from the decks of each.

As the Castle returned the salute, the sun rose from the sea and painted the harbor with its rosy rays, while falling full upon the Sea Shadower, it gave her the appearance of being a crimson craft, while the effect was added to from the volumes of smoke from her guns enveloping her hull, and floating seaward with her as upon a bank of clouds.

"Ah, me, Pearl, how strange, how beautiful!" cried Ethel.

"Yes, what a weirdly striking effect she has—like a red ship. My God! I hope it is not prophetic, an ill-omen!"

"Heaven grant not, Pearl, for yonder craft holds for me nearly all that I hold dear in this world."

"And for me, Ethel, so our hopes are yonder together," was the sad reply of Pearl Revere.

And then Mrs. Stanwood joined them, and the three stood watching the brig until she sped on past Beacon Island, and became a mere speck on the horizon, that, also, to soon fade from sight.

The brig had sailed, bearing the prisoner away in chains, to a living death, a dungeon for life.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A QUINTETTE OF "SEA REBELS."

Against the bank in the Hudson River a large clipper ship lay moored, a vessel that had swept across the seas like the swift racer she was, while carrying a merchant flag, for her mission had been one of peace.

But the fine craft had lowered her British

ensign, hauled down her merchant colors, and was being metamorphosed into a vessel-of-war.

Upon her decks had already been placed a formidable battery, she had been more heavily sparred than before, and her bulwarks had been pierced for a broadside of ten guns.

Upon her decks were over a hundred men at work putting in the finishing touches, and piles of boxes, bales and racks were ashore ready to be stowed aboard.

Suddenly a horseman dashed up, his horse showing the effects of hard riding, and dismounting he was halted by the sentinel on duty at the gangway.

"Let him pass, sir, for he is a courier," sternly said a gray-haired officer in the uniform of the colonists' navy, who was pacing the deck.

"Are you Captain Paul, sir, of the armed clipper Iron Wing, sir?"

"I am, sir."

"Then I have dispatches for you from General Washington, whose camp I left forty-eight hours ago."

"Ah! come into the cabin and warm up with a glass of grog, while I look over the dispatches, and your horse shall be stabled at yonder farm."

And giving the necessary orders Captain Paul led the man into the cabin, bade the young officer who had come as courier be seated and placed a decanter of brandy and glasses before him.

Then he broke the official seal of the new States and read:

"CAPTAIN JOHN PAUL,

"Com'g Amer'can Clipper-of-War."

"Iron Wing:

"Sir:—I am instructed by General George Washington, Commander-in-Chief Continental Armies, to state that from information just received by him from a reliable source, that he thinks it will be possible for you to capture, or aid in the capture of the British brig-of-war Sea Shadower."

"The said brig was once the pirate schooner of Captain Crimson, and known as the Red Shark, but was captured by an American merchant captain, then in the British service, by the name of Noel Stanwood, and she was altered into a brig."

"She has been refitted, armed and manned by over a hundred men, and a full complement of officers, carries fifteen guns, six to a broadside and three pivots."

"The brig is known to be remarkably fleet, and sails from Boston upon the morning of the seventeenth proximo."

"The commander-in-chief hopes that your vessel is near enough ready for sea for you to be able to get into the brig's course, and lead her off, and orders have been also dispatched to the privateer brig Racer, ten guns, now fitting out at Sag Harbor, Long Island, the privateer schooner Brimstone, eight guns, now lying in the Connecticut River, and preparing for sea, and the cutter Spray, now having her battery put on board in the Kennebec River, to also get away in time to lie in wait for the Sea Shadower, and endeavor to entrap her."

"Should the other vessels named cross your path, you will act as commodore, and each of the fleet will be known to one another by hoisting a red flag at the fore."

"These instructions are also forwarded to the other commanders, and it is the earnest hope of the commander-in-chief that this splendid British brig will be captured, and Captain Noel Stanwood, a patriot prisoner on board, will be rescued from his sentence of a life imprisonment, which he is to be taken to England to serve out."

"If captured, there will be on board the brig a certain nobleman, going as passenger to England, and this gentleman, with his servant and all his effects, are to go unmolested, while one of the privateers, which one you deem best suited for the purpose, will carry him to the English Coast with all dispatch."

"A response by Lieutenant Boykin, as to whether your clipper will be armed and ready for sea in time, is respectfully requested by General Washington."

"By command

"GEORGE WASHINGTON,

"Commander-in-Chief,

"REAR,

"Aide."

Captain Paul read the letter through with a brightening face, and when he had finished it he said, earnestly:

"The Iron Wing shall be ready to sail, sir, for I shall work on her day and night, and get to sea within three days, which will give me time to reach the cruising-ground I need."

"The other vessels, the Racer, Brimstone and Spray I hope will be on hand, for I know that British craft well, and we must have her for our new navy without fail."

Having remained for some hours to rest, Lieutenant Boykin started upon his return to the patriot army headquarters, and General Washington enjoyed the satisfaction of knowing that a quartette of fine vessels would soon be at sea in search of the British brig Sea Shadower.

And there was one other that General Washington knew not of, that had her crew

working day and night to get their craft ready for sea.

That one was the privateer schooner Spitfire, under Captain Dale, and in which Skipper Zeke Welby held a financial as well as a patriotic interest.

With his two new men Skipper Zeke had sailed away from Boston, presumably for another cargo of fresh provisions, but in reality to trust the shallop no more in reach of a British gun.

He had headed for the Saugus River, and had run up to the inlet where the Spitfire was at anchor, and reported to Captain Dale that he was unable to bring back with him Jack Ross, and which was a great regret to the privateersman.

The skipper also told Captain Dale that the brig-of-war Sea Shadower was to sail on a given date, having Noel Stanwood on board as a prisoner.

"If you c'u'd only rescue that lad, Dale, yer'd make me as happy as a boy, and ef yer c'u'd capter ther brig, then yer'd have ther fastest keel afloat, bar none," said Zeke.

"Except the Shadow Ship."

"Lordy, I hain't including ghosts."

"You really believe that white, spectral-looking craft to be a ghost-ship, then?"

"Waal, I really do, for if it hain't ther ghost o' a craft, durned ef it's any real craft, for I knows a human from a spook, and the same of ships."

"Well, I'll get to sea in time, Skipper Zeke, for I received word that my crew would arrive to-morrow, and I'll try and capture the brig, so as to run down the Shadow Ship."

Two days after, Skipper Zeke saw the Spitfire spread her sails and fly seaward, and he then went on his way toward the Kennebec.

And upon the ocean a quintette of armed Sea Rebels were lying in wait for the Sea Shadower.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE SEA SHADOWER SHADOWED.

The wildest expectations of Lord Erskine, and his hopes did not meet the reality of what the brig under her improvements and new rig accomplished in the way of speed, when she cast the Castle astern on her run out.

The coast-guard schooner known as the Ocean Outpost, was a fleet craft, and having rested, as it were, after her chase of the Shadow Silver Ship, she was ready to start upon her cruise among the islands and in the adjacent waters to Boston Bay.

Her commander, Captain Turpin, saluted the brig as she went by, but he had been most anxious to try conclusions with her, and so, without appearing to be ready, all was in readiness for her to fall away astern of the Sea Shadower for a race out to the Beacon, or The Graves.*

The captain, his officers and men all felt that they would have a joke upon Captain Caldwell and his crew, for it was believed that the Ocean Outpost could hold her own, if not creep up on the brig.

The schooner was at once crowded with canvas and went rushing on after the brig, and her coming was discovered by Lord Lennox, who was wistfully leaning against the taffrail and gazing astern, after the salute to the Castle had been returned.

"Pardon me, Caldwell, but you have a chance to take the conceit out of Turpin if you will, for I saw that he was ready for us when we came by."

"Egad, but I'd like to, but how, my lord?"

"He is starting out on his cruise for the day—see, his schooner is literally loaded with sail, so if you keep the brig close he can creep up and when he passes, then show him that we waited for him," and Lord Erskine, a thorough sportsman, was delighted at the chance of a race.

"Thank you, my lord, I'll soon have the brig sailing at her worst," and Caldwell hastily gave his orders, the result of which, by hauling a shee too flat, and letting slack another sail, while the helmsman did not

*Since 1776 the harbor of Boston and Bay have materially changed. Several of the islands down on a map by British Engineers, made in 1774, have disappeared wholly, and others have formed, while new names have also taken the place of old ones in a few instances. THE AUTHOR.

steer particularly well, the schooner was seen to be holding her own.

"Drop a cable over her bows," suggested Lord Erskine, and this being done the brig dropped to much slower speed and the pretty schooner came creeping up on her in fine style.

The tide was with them, the wind from northwest and blowing fresh, and the sight of the two racing vessels was a beautiful one.

Captain Turpin was in an ecstasy of delight at the performance of his vessel.

He had spun by frigates, sloops-of-war, brigs and schooners, when running in and out, and was proud of his little flyer, as he called his schooner; but he was absolutely delighted when he saw himself creeping up on the famous brig.

"Pass her to windward, sir?" asked his lieutenant, as the schooner bowled along in the wake of the brig.

"Yes, we will blanket him, shoot by him, and run out past the beacon well ahead—this is grand, grand," and Captain Turpin rubbed his hands in glee.

The brig now had Rainsforth Island abreast of it, to the south, and was in Nantasket Roads, with the sharp bowsprit of the schooner even with the taffrail and crawling up, while she would when abeam be not one-half pistol-shot away.

The crew of the brig stood in silence, but the grin on their faces was not seen by the men on the schooner.

Nearer and nearer crept the schooner until they were abeam and their quarter-decks were within easy conversing distance.

"Well, Turpin, did some last dispatches come in for Lord Erskine, that you came after us?" asked Captain Caldwell.

"Oh no, I was merely going on my regular rounds and thought I would run down with you. Your brig sails well, Caldwell, for few craft can keep abeam of the Ocean Outpost as she does," and a broad smile was upon every face on the schooner.

"Ah, yes, she does sail well, as you shall see, for as you have no later dispatches for us, we shall not wait for you as we have been doing. Let the brig go ahead, Mr. Bonair."

A laugh from the quarter-deck of the schooner greeted Captain Caldwell's words, and it faded away into a look of wonder when Lieutenant Bonair's fine voice was heard:

"Haul in that dragging cable over the lee bows there."

"Haul taut on the squaresail sheet and the jib-sheets, and slack away on the main boom and foresail."

"That's it, lads, now she'll give the wind a chance at her, and you can give the schooner's men a good by cheer."

A perfect roar broke from the brig's crew, which no longer held back, shot away from the schooner at a pace that made Captain Turpin green with envy.

"Thank you, my lord, for the chance you gave us to drag Turpin's feathers in the dust," said Caldwell in great glee, and raising his voice, he called out:

"Ho, Turpin!"

"Ay ay!"

"Just tell them back in town that we waited for you, please."

"I believe your infernal craft is akin to the Shadow Ship," came back the answer from the disappointed Turpin, and his words brought a smile even to the sad face of Lord Erskine, saddened at the memory of his dead father, and the fact that he was leaving behind him, perhaps forever, the woman he loved with his whole heart and soul.

When the brig had dropped Egg Island out of sight astern, the afternoon was creeping on, and with an after-dinner cigar in his lips, Lord Erskine paced the deck for some time.

Then he took his glass and swept the sea, not ahead, but astern.

His quick eye detected a sail far away over the starboard quarter a couple of points, as though coming out of Cape Cod Bay.

"That is one of them," he said calmly, and then he turned his glass upon the other side of Boston Bay.

"Yes, and there is another, coming on a course which must have brought her out of a hiding place in Marblehead Harbor."

"The one in the direction of Cape Cod is a large ship, and the other is a brig, I think,"

and a strange smile was upon his face as he continued to pace to and fro.

Captain Caldwell, feeling safe now in his command, was enjoying the dignity of his position in his cabin.

"Putting on airs," the middies said, and they had gotten it very nearly correct.

He was a man of low caliber, and the fact that he had stepped in a few weeks from the obscurity of a junior lieutenancy to the captaincy of the finest brig afloat almost turned his head, and gave him a power that was dangerous to intrust in the hands of such a man.

As a lieutenant, with masters over him, he was an excellent officer, cool, skillful and brave.

But as a commander he was one to lose his head, so to speak, and it was well that he had such a fine specimen of the thorough sailor as his first luff, Brainard Bonair.

And more, it was particularly fortunate that the presence of Lord Erskine on board was a check to him.

If seen by the lookout aloft, the two sails were not reported, and Lord Erskine glanced upward to see who the man was.

It was Jack Ross.

"Well, he has no orders to report vessels far astern, I believe."

"Now for a glance ahead with what is left us of the daylight," and Lord Erskine leveled his glass ahead.

Just as he did so, the lookout who saw his act suddenly called out:

"Sail, ho!"

"He saw her before, but reported her when he knew I would discover her."

"It is a large schooner, and she is directly in our course."

Just then Lieutenant Bonair, who was officer of the deck, called out in answer to the lookout's hail:

"Whereaway, my man?"

"Dead ahead, sir."

"Ay, ay. What do you make her out from aloft?"

"A large schooner, sir."

"Then armed, of course, and a British cruiser or a rebel privateer."

"Keep your eye on her, my man."

"Sail, ho!"

"Ah! and whereaway?"

"Three points off the lee bow, sir."

"Ay, ay! also in our course, so watch her."

"Ay, ay, sir—Sail, ho!"

"Ah! they are getting numerous, my lord," said Lieutenant Bonair with a laugh, and calling out to the man aloft, he asked:

"Where is she, and what do you make of her?"

"Three points off the windward bow, sir, and also a schooner."

"And the first?"

"Still holds dead ahead, sir."

"All schooners?"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"And their course?"

"The one dead ahead, sir, seems to be laying to, and the two others moving under shortened sail toward the brig."

"Ay, ay, this craft has nothing to fear from them."

"The Sea Shadower is shadowed," muttered Lord Erskine to himself, and he swept the horizon with his glass, taking in the three vessels ahead and the two coming on rapidly astern.

Then he added:

"General Washington is in earnest."

CHAPTER XXXI.

IN CLOSE QUARTERS.

THE sun set with the brig in a triangle of danger, as it were.

The sun went down clear, the weather was cold, and the wind steady and strong; but away over in the eastward were some black, ugly-looking clouds that betokened rough weather.

The three vessels ahead seemed almost in a line with each other, the center one being perhaps a mile or so further off.

All seemed to be under shortened sail, and they were on courses which, if the brig remained stationary, would bring them directly to her within three hours or so.

Lieutenant Bonair reported the situation to Captain Caldwell, and asked if he had not best stand away to the south, or north, so

that in the darkness he could dodge them while they were yet far off.

The answer from the cabin was that he must hold his course as he then was, and that there was nothing to fear for the brig.

Lieutenant Bonair again reported half an hour after that two vessels were coming on astern, as though in chase, but far enough apart to head off the brig, did she now attempt to run north or south.

Captain Caldwell put on his great-coat and came on deck to have a look at the situation.

He took a close glance around, said that he did not believe there was anything to fear if the five vessels proved to be all cruisers, and if they were any of them merchantmen then there was a chance for the brig to capture a prize.

So saying, he returned to the cabin, not liking the cold winds he encountered on deck.

Thither Lord Erskine followed him, for it was near the supper hour, and throwing off his cloak, for the two occupied the cabin together, he said:

"Caldwell, I am going to ask a favor of you."

"Well, my lord?"

"It is for that poor fellow Stanwood."

"Yes."

"You know him to be a gentleman, or, to put it from the standpoint of some, to have been a gentleman before he lost his fortune."

"You are also aware of the very remarkable services he has rendered the Government and that you, as well as I and many more, owe our lives to him on more than one occasion."

"To what does all this tend, my lord?" asked Captain Caldwell, with some show of impatience.

"You shall hear, sir, for I wish you to fully understand the situation from my standpoint, and there is ample time, for it is half an hour before supper and you are not engaged just now."

Caldwell bit his lip like a man vexed, but Lord Erskine continued:

"Now, you must know, in your inmost heart, that the trial of Stanwood was a farce, as it was decided to hang him, only there was too strong influence to back him for the military court, to go that far, so they compromised."

"Your influence, my lord, for instance."

"Yes, and I do possess some little, as I informed the gentlemen of that military court they should discover."

Caspar Caldwell winced at this, for his rank as captain might still hang by a slender thread.

"As I said, it was a farce, and now that Stanwood is on his way to a life imprisonment, and there is no danger of his escape in mid-ocean, I beg, as he is my friend, that you allow him to be free for the voyage and accept the hospitality of the cabin, for as you know I am, though a passenger, partly your host."

This was true, for Lord Erskine had, at his own expense, most generally stocked the cabin larders, and engaged the cook, while his servant, Grimes, did the services for both Caldwell and himself.

"I am sorry I cannot grant your request, my lord, but I have no desire to sit at table with a condemned criminal, nor to allow a man who should have been hanged to go free from his irons, having the liberty of the deck."

"As you please, sir; the cabin is yours, so at your service wholly—Grimes!"

"Yes, my lord."

"Transfer my baggage to the ward-room, the state-room adjoining Lieutenant Bonair being vacant, and I shall mess there for the balance of the voyage."

"Yes, sir."

"But, my lord, you surely will not make yourself thus uncomfortable?" urged Caldwell.

"As I spent months as an officer of this ship in the ward-room, I know that the quarters are comfortable, and I shall be in pleasant company with Bonair and his mess."

"I cannot permit you to leave, my lord," said Caspar Caldwell, who knew that his own supplies were very scant and mean, and he knew how generous were those of Lord Erskine, and especially the rare old wines, such as he had had at dinner.

But he added:
"And all on account of that criminal, Stanwood."

"Lieutenant Caspar Caldwell, when you referred to Captain Noel Stanwood, awhile since, as a criminal, and a man who *should* have been hanged, I passed it over; but now I notice it, only to say that if you offer another insult to my friend, now in irons on board this brig, I shall make it a personal matter with you the moment we reach England."

"Good-evening, sir."

In vain did the now frightened captain call to Lord Erskine to return, that he begged to offer an apology, for he had been too hasty.

Lord Erskine left the cabin, and Grimes transferred his belongings to the ward-room.

Casper Caldwell cursed himself mentally for a fool, for the bottle of delicious wine set out for the evening meal, Grimes took with him, and the cook dropped supper half-finished, and transferred his quarters to the ward-room, greatly to the delight of the officers of that mess.

Lord Erskine was not a man to be bullied, and he saw that Captain Caldwell had determined to persecute his prisoner, and more, make him, Erskine, feel that he having sailed as a passenger, had no authority aboard the brig once she was out of port.

A sailor cook was sent for to get the captain's supper, and a meager meal it was, while Lord Erskine's wines and edibles were lavishly placed out for the benefit of the ward-room mess, and his high-priced cook served up a supper that made the hearts of the officers happy by catering to their appetites.

Soon after supper Lord Erskine, having been made most comfortable in the ward-room, stepped up to the officer of the deck, Brainard Bonair, and asked permission to see the prisoner.

It was cheerfully granted, and making his way to the quarters of the warrant officers, Lord Erskine found Noel Stanwood there, ironed to a ring-bolt, and with manacles upon ankles and wrists, this having been ordered by Captain Caldwell after sailing from Boston.

But the proud spirit of the prisoner was not broken, and he greeted his visitor cheerfully.

"Stanwood, my unfortunate friend, I called to say that I had hoped to better your condition once we were under way, but Caldwell refused to allow you to go free, or be confined in the cabin, where, as there were but two of us, there was plenty of room."

"You are most kind, my lord, but I pray you do not have trouble with Captain Caldwell on my account," said Stanwood.

"No fear of that, my friend."

"Yes, but there is, for I heard the men laughing about how you snubbed the captain, and had left the cabin."

"I am just as comfortable where I am, and the company is far preferable; but as I know that a voyage to one in your condition is most wearing, let me give you a ray of hope, and that is the fact of there being several rebel enemies shadowing the Sea Shadower, and to rescue you is their ultimate aim."

"In fact, they have the brig now in very close quarters. — Good-night," and Lord Erskine left a ray of hope in the prisoner's heart that flushed his face with joy.

CHAPTER XXXII.

RED SIGNALS.

Casper Caldwell was in a very bad humor when he went on deck after the frugal supper he had from his own stores.

He had taken a stand and his mulish nature meant to keep him in it, though he knew that Lord Erskine was a dangerous man to have as an enemy.

Still he felt that he could not be censured because he did not set the prisoner free to enjoy the liberty of the ship, and hoped that he would be upheld in his act by the Admiralty in England.

Still he was angry for having angered Lord Erskine, to whom he could have made his refusal in a very different manner than what he did.

"I don't like the position we are in, sir," said Brainard Bonair, who was to go off

watch in a short while when eight bells struck.

"I would not like it, sir, were it not that I have perfect confidence in myself and in the brig," said Caldwell, haughtily.

"You see, sir, that as we shortened sail, according to your orders, the vessels astern have crept up well, and those ahead are stretched out so that we are pretty well surrounded, should they all be enemies."

This startled Casper Caldwell exceedingly. He felt that he had been enjoying his dignity in the cabin, heedless of the reports sent from the deck that his vessel was running into close quarters.

He now saw that the craft on his star-board quarter was a large vessel, and sailing well, while she was not much over a league away.

The one on the port stern quarter was fully a league and a half distant, and a brig.

Then there was a large schooner dead ahead, two leagues distant, with one on each bow half a dozen points, and equally as far off.

But it placed the Sea Shadower in a very dangerous position, a circle, as Lieutenant Bonair had said.

There were many clouds to the windward, and there would certainly be a blow before morning; but now a moon just entering its third quarter showed all the craft in sight, and that they had a common purpose in view seemed evident.

They could not be all British crafts, and if Americans, how was it possible for them to be in that latitude together?

"What do you make of them, Bonair?" asked Caldwell somewhat anxiously.

"That they are Americans, sir."

"But how is that possible?"

"Well, sir, the Americans are getting a navy rapidly, and also a number of privateers afloat."

"But here are five vessels."

"True, sir, and my idea is that as it has been known for a couple of weeks that the brig would sail to-day, that she has been refitted, armed and splendidly equipped, the Yankees concluded that they wanted her, so sent every available craft to head her off and surround her."

"We should have run for it when these vessels were sighted ahead."

"I fear no rebel craft, Mr. Bonair."

"Very true, sir; but there are five here now."

"I do not believe they are all Americans — do you my Lord Erskine?"

Casper Caldwell had humbled himself to address Lord Erskine, who when he came on deck, had walked away to himself.

"I beg pardon, sir, but did you speak to me?"

"Yes, my lord, I asked your opinion as to those five vessels."

"I observe, sir, what has doubtless escaped the attention of both Lieutenant Bonair and yourself."

"Yes, sir?"

"Just before sunset I noticed that each of the five carried a large red flag at the fore."

"Indeed?"

"They did."

"This would seem to be a signal."

"More so, when as you now observe they each carry a red light at the fore."

"You are right, my lord, and this proves that the vessels are all under the same flag — was it the rebel flag, my lord?"

"It was too far to distinguish more than that they were large and of crimson hue."

"Then you think the brig is in a tight place?"

"I would consider any other vessel as good as captured, but the brig is such a fleet sailer, she has such a splendid battery and a large crew, so the chances are that she may run the gantlet."

"Pardon, my lord, but I would like to ask, if you deem it best to hold on?"

"No, for you run into the circle of fire from five foes, while if you wear around, square away before the wind and run for it you bring but the two vessels to leeward against you."

"I thank you, and will take your advice; but it will be well to call the men to quarters so as to fight it out."

"Certainly, Captain Caldwell, and it is unfortunate that one of the schooners is not in the place of the large square-rigger, whose guns must be heavy ones."

"How would it do to beat up to windward?"

"No, you could not do it, fast as the brig is, without getting into close quarters with two of them, while to run before the wind you can cross the line all of a mile away from the square-rigger, and half that much more away from the schooner."

"That is so, my lord, and I will call the men to quarters, prepare the brig for action, then square away and run for it."

"Mr. Bonair, prepare the brig for action, sir!"

"Ay, ay, sir," and the order was given.

Then, to the amazement of all the officers of the brig the men formed in column and marched back to the quarter-deck, and at their head was Jack Ross.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE CREW OF THE SEA SHADOWER.

"WHAT does this mean?"

"Go to quarters you devils!" roared Caspar Caldwell, as he saw the men, almost to a man, march aft and confront him as he stood upon the quarter-deck; Lord Erskine and Lieutenant Bonair near, and the other officers of the brig, a dozen in number, grouped not far distant.

Jack Ross replied, and his voice was distinctly heard, while what he said was to the point.

"I have the honor, Captain Caldwell, to be chosen the mouth-piece of my mates, though I am but a new man aboard ship."

"Well, sir, I ordered you to go to quarters."

"Why do you not obey?"

"That is just what my mates desire me to make known to you, Captain Caldwell, and I beg to say that they believe the vessels in sight to be American cruisers."

"I know them to be, sir, and I desire to cut through their line."

"You will have to secure another crew then, Captain Caldwell, for it so happens that the warrant officers are all Englishmen, while out of the one hundred seamen you shipped, seventy of them are Americans."

"Ha! mutiny?"

"Do you mean to mutiny, you devils?" yelled Captain Caldwell, livid with rage.

"No, Captain Caldwell, there will be no mutiny, for that time has passed, as every one of your warrant officers, and the ten English seamen are all lying drugged below decks, and we, the Americans, are masters here — Hold! if you attempt any act of violence you will be swung up to the yard-arm; that I will tell you frankly; but submit, you and your officers, and your lives shall be spared."

"We are in deadly earnest, Captain Caldwell."

"To turn this craft into a pirate," sneered Caspar Caldwell, who felt that he was utterly at the mercy of the crew.

He had his sword alone on, and the several officers on watch had their weapons; but Lord Erskine and the others had not their side-arms on, and it was noticed that the marines had their muskets and stood at a "ready."

"Captain Caldwell, you are mistaken, sir, for we do not intend to turn this brig into a pirate, but simply to change masters and flags."

"Norcross, please bring the one whom we have decided shall command the brig."

Nick Norcross went below, and the silence that followed was painful, Caspar Caldwell pacing the deck like a caged lion, while Lieutenant Bonair stood ready to die in defending the brig if necessary.

The other officers grouped together were in awful suspense, and powerless.

As for Lord Erskine, he stood near the wheel calmly surveying the scene, like one who held no interest in what was transpiring.

Thus several moments passed away, and then Caspar Caldwell, grown desperate, wheeled toward the crew and roared:

"Will you go to quarters, or not?"

"We will not, sir," firmly responded Jack Ross.

"Then I shall run you through the heart, Sir Mutineer," and Captain Caldwell stepped forward, drawing his sword as he did so.

But Jack Ross did not move, and the moonlight revealed a quiet smile upon his face as he said:

"Do not throw your life away, Captain Caldwell."

At this moment Nick Norcross returned, and there by his side was the prisoner, Noel Stanwood, but no longer in irons.

"Men, what does this mean?" and he glanced over the crew and then at the group of officers.

"It means, sir, that the crew shipped for this British brig happened to be mostly Americans, and that we have decided to be masters here, haul down the ensign of a king, and hoist the Stars and Stripes of our new nation, while you, Captain Noel Stanwood, we greet as our commander."

A wild cheer followed the words of Jack Ross, and the heart of Caspar Caldwell almost ceased to beat, so intense was his fury.

At once did Noel Stanwood reply, and a silence that could be felt rested upon all.

"Captain Caldwell, and you, Lord Erskine, and you, brother officers, I wish to say, upon my honor, not a hint of this was known to me until my irons were taken off and I was brought here before you."

"A likely story this, Sir Pirate," hissed Caspar Caldwell.

But unheeding him, Noel Stanwood continued:

"As, however, it so happens that I am a prisoner on board, sentenced to a life imprisonment for crimes I am guiltless of, as I first captured the craft from her pirate master, and thrice saved her from capture by buccaneers, once saved her from being wrecked, and while her commander captured for the British king an armed prize, and a merchantman, for which I received no prize money, I may say with justice that she is the very vessel I hold a claim upon, and owing no allegiance to George the Third, but every allegiance to my native land and its people, I shall accept the command thus tendered me by this patriot crew—"

A wild cheering here drowned the voice of the speaker, but moving his hand for silence, he continued:

"I shall accept the command of this brig, thus offered me by an American crew, in justice to them, as a duty to my country, and an honor to myself, but upon conditions."

"That I am to be hanged, I suppose, Sir Pirate?" again sneered Caspar Caldwell.

Again unheeding him, Noel Stanwood resumed:

"My conditions, my men, are that Captain Caldwell, his officers and his honored passenger, Lord Erskine Enders, and those of the warrant officers and Englishmen among the crew who so desire, shall be landed in safety, with all of their belongings, upon the coast of England."

"Better hang the cap'n," shouted a voice, and instantly it was taken up, and a roar of cries came:

"Hang him!"

"Hang Caldwell!"

"String up the Britisher!"

"Yard-arm Caspar Caldwell!"

"Hang him!"

"Kill him!"

"Shoot him, lads!"

"Silence!"

Above the voices rung that of Noel Stanwood, and he fronted the wild crowd of shouters.

"Men, I will have none of this, so put me back in my irons, as I accept, only under the conditions I have named, to command this brig."

"Captain Caldwell lied at the trial, to hang you, sir," cried one.

"He was mean to you, sir, and meant to be worse."

"You have heard my alternative, men, so what is your answer?"

"That we would let the devil himself go free, to have you for our captain, sir," cried Jack Ross's manly tones, and he swayed the excited men his way.

"Yes, Jack Ross says right, eh, men?" chimed in Nick Norcross, and then came in chorus:

"Yes, yes!"

"Three cheers for our rebel captain!"

They were given with a will, and springing upon the quarter-deck, Noel Stanwood raised his tarpaulin and said:

"Men, I thank you, and you and I will make a name for our splendid vessel."

Then turning to the officers of the brig, he continued:

"Captain Caldwell, you and your officers are my guests for the cruise, if you will only give me your parole not to interfere in any manner whatever with the working of this brig."

"I hope you will give me the pledge?"

All eyes turned upon Captain Caldwell.

His face had turned to the hue seen on the faces of the dead.

His pride, his ambition, his dreams of honor and fame were dashed by one fell blow to the ground.

He remembered how he had said that he was glad to have so many Americans in his crew, for he would soon get them killed off, and put brave Britons in their place.

Already while in command he had spared his Englishmen, and put the work upon the Americans.

He had made incompetent men, in most cases, warrant officers, because they were Englishmen, and not an American on board had been advanced in the slightest, while those whom Lord Erskine had appointed while commander, he had removed on petty charges for his own favorites.

Now he was face to face with an outraged crew, and the man whom he had done all in his power to send to the yard-arm, and whom he had had in his power as a prisoner, was now his master.

A man to whom he had refused any courtesy, whom he had removed from his state-room in the ward-room to be chained, double-ironed, to a ring-bolt forward among the men, now had it in his power to make him suffer, and instead, had bade him welcome as his guest.

Words would not come to him as he stood there before Noel Stanwood, and in a speechless rage he turned upon his heel and strode toward the cabin.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A CHANGE OF MASTERS.

"STOP, sir!"

It was Lord Erskine who confronted Caspar Caldwell as he walked toward the cabin, and his voice was stern and threatening.

Captain Caldwell started, and would have stepped to one side and continued on his way, but Lord Erskine still faced him and said sternly:

"Captain Caldwell, as man to man, sir, I speak, and I demand that you show that you are not devoid of all manhood by facing this gentleman, this crew, and speaking for your officers, if not for yourself."

"Your vessel has been taken from you peacefully when in an hour more she would have been captured by force of arms from your enemies surrounding you upon the sea."

"The prisoner placed in command accepted his captaincy only on conditions that you and your officers, myself and those of your crew who so desired, should be safely landed upon English soil."

"Then he asks for your parole, our parole, and makes us his guests for the cruise."

"Do you, Captain Caldwell, in the face of all this, dare to turn your back upon him, to enter his cabin, leaving your officers and men at his mercy and to the fury of a justly enraged crew?"

"I demand, sir, as your superior in rank, if not your commander now, that you act as a king's officer should, as a man at least."

The withering sarcasm of the angry nobleman made Caspar Caldwell fairly writhe, and his officers almost pitied him under the scathing rebuke of Lord Erskine, who when aroused was known to be a very dangerous man.

For a moment Caspar Caldwell could not, or would not speak.

Then he said huskily:

"My command has been taken from me, sir, by a band of mutineers, who have placed a pirate prisoner as captain over them, and it is not my desire or my intention to accept any favor from a criminal and an outlaw, so I leave you, Lieutenant Bonair, to make what terms you can, while I retire to my cabin to await your report."

"As for you, my Lord Erskine Enders, now is not the time to resent your insulting words."

"Oh, any time for that, Caldwell," was the indifferent reply as Caspar Caldwell again moved on.

But now it was Noel Stanwood who halted him, and his hand fell heavily upon the shoulder of the British officer.

"Hold!"

"You refused my hospitality in the cabin, and you shall now accept it forward."

"Mr. Norcross, put this man in the irons you just removed from me."

A murmur ran around upon all sides, while Caspar Caldwell gave utterance to a mingled cry of horror and anger.

Then he dropped his hand, which was raised with his sword in it, but with an exhibition of strength that was marvelous, it was wrenched from his hand, thrown to the deck, and the blade broken from the hilt by the heel of Noel Stanwood, who said with strange calmness:

"You are unworthy, sir, to carry the weapon."

"Mr. Norcross, obey my command, sir."

In an instant the unfortunate captain was seized and dragged forward, while clear rung the command:

"To your posts, lads, for a better look at our sea neighbors."

The crew with a cheer sprung to their posts, while Lord Erskine stepped forward and said:

"Captain Stanwood, for myself let me thank you most sincerely for your extreme kindness."

"You are more than welcome, Lord Erskine."

"And permit me, my dear Stanwood, to offer my hand-in-congratulation at your escape, and gratitude for your action toward me," said Lieutenant Bonair, who, though deeply pained at the loss of the brig and the utter discomfiture of Caspar Caldwell, could not but be glad of the escape of Stanwood, and thankful that himself and his brother officers had not been put in irons and sent below.

If there were any sore-heads among the group of officers, none felt bad enough to wish to follow the example of their captain, and they came forward to a man, and thanking Stanwood, gave their parole and were told to keep their present quarters until their arrival in England.

"Now go forward, Norcross, and rouse those poor fellows you drugged into unconsciousness, and see if any of them care to ship under the new flag, for as Americans have had to serve under the British ensign, a return of the compliment is but fair."

"Those who do not, and who show a disposition to be ugly, confine below decks, but all who wish to serve as seamen, allow them to do so."

When Norcross had gone on his mission, turning to Lord Erskine and the group of officers, Stanwood continued:

"I am very sorry, gentlemen, that Captain Caldwell forced me to take the steps that I did with him, and which you all witnessed was not my fault."

"He has been my bitter foe, why I know not, except that I am an American; but I meant to treat him with marked respect had he allowed it."

"Now, I must see first what those vessels are, for if they should be foes, then I am in rather close quarters."

"Permit me to relieve your mind, Captain Stanwood, for I happen to know that those vessels are American cruisers, or privateers, sent out by General Washington to capture this brig, especially to rescue you, sir, from your unjust and cruel sentence—see, each one carries a red light at her foretop, and it would be well for us to send up the same, as we are getting well in range now."

The speaker was Jack Ross, and all listened with deep attention to his words, while Lord Erskine's face was the picture of innocence.

As Lord Erskine had hinted as much to Noel Stanwood, and Jack Ross now avowed the nature of the five cruisers, the young captain was convinced that there was something in the red signals, and so said:

"I am glad of your explanation, Mr. Ross, and permit me to request that you serve as my first officer, Mr. Norcross being second, while the others I will appoint in good time. Oh, Mr. Norcross, I have just made you my second officer; but what say the warrant officers and men below?"

"The boatswain, sir, is an American and a good man, too, so says he would gladly

have joined us if we had not been afraid to try him. The others are growlers and very sore over it, while about one-half of the seamen are glad to be with us."

"That is fortunate, so bid the boatswain continue his duties as such, and those of the men who are with us send to their posts, while the others keep below under guard. Lord Erskine, I am happy to have had a bloodless victory."

"You are fortunate, indeed, Captain Stanwood, and I congratulate you," was the answer; and just then up to the foretop went a large blood-red lantern to match the signal lights shown upon the five other vessels, now verging toward a common center with the brig the object of their attraction.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE RED REBEL.

THE sending up of the red light on board the brig, to the foretop, seemed to be a surprise to the other vessels, to judge from the movements on board, as on each craft a red lantern was waved, beginning with the large ship and then going the rounds.

This was not done upon the Sea Shadower, for Noel Stanwood determined to make no mistake.

The nearest vessel to him now was the ship, not over half a league away, and the furthest off of the other four was not over two miles.

Then came the sound of the drum on the ship, beating to quarters, and it was followed by a like call on the others.

"Mr. Ross, I shall bring the ship to, for I do not care to receive a broadside from our own people, if they are so, as you believe," said Stanwood.

"It is the best plan, sir, and if they see we offer no resistance, no shot will be fired at us," responded Jack Ross, who had, with Nick Norcross, taken his promotion very coolly, though delighted at being so appointed.

The brig was accordingly brought to, and the crew stood at the guns, ready for action, yet not expecting to go into a combat, from what Jack Ross had said to them about the vessels.

Lord Erskine and Lieutenant Brainard Bonair stood apart, talking together in a low tone, and the other British officers were in a group aft, also conversing, and their theme was the unwarrantable conduct of Captain Caldwell, for whom not an atom of sympathy was felt.

In fact it was the general belief that Captain Stanwood had been very lenient with him, considering all the circumstances of the case, and his own situation.

The brig, while lying to, was calmly awaiting the arrival of the other vessels, prepared to meet friends or foes.

The men were willing to fight, if so their commanders ordered it, and the brig had only lost about a score of men, all told, through the change of masters.

That Noel Stanwood was an idol among the men, all could see, and he certainly had won the admiration of his British guests.

So far he had not entered the cabin even, but Grimes had been ordered to make Lord Erskine and Lieutenant Bonair comfortable therein, and a state-room was fitted up for the new captain.

The vessels now were very near, and with guns run out, their men at the guns, battle lanterns in place and all ready, were coming down upon the brig.

It certainly was a most critical moment, and yet Noel Stanwood was perfectly cool and glanced over his ship and crew with the look of a man who meant to greet them as friends if they so proved, or enemies if it was necessary so to do.

Nearer and nearer until the large ship was within hailing distance.

Then came the hail:

"Brig ahoy!"

"Ahoy, the ship!"

"What brig is that?"

"The Sea Shadower, from Boston and bound to London."

"You are surrounded by foes and it would be madness to resist, so I suppose you surrender?"

"Who and what are you?"

"The armed clipper Iron Wing, Captain John Paul of the American Navy."

"Ah, glad to meet you, Captain Paul, and

to know that you are of the American Navy."

"Is not that a British brig?"

"She was until an hour ago, sir, when she changed hands."

"Ha! what do you mean, and is there not an American prisoner on board in irons, Captain Noel Stanwood?"

"There is a prisoner on board, sir, and in irons; but it is Captain Caspar Caldwell the British commander, and it is Noel Stanwood who is now speaking with you."

"Will you not come aboard, sir?"

"With pleasure," and the armed clipper was now luffed near the brig and a boat soon after shot out from her side, while the brig and three schooners came up and formed a circle around the Sea Shadower.

Captain Paul was met at the gangway by Noel Stanwood who, in a few words, told him all that had happened.

The American commander of the Iron Wing was amazed and delighted, and asked to call the commanders of the other vessels aboard, whom he had not met, and said:

"I had my orders from General Washington to put to sea in all haste and look you up, and the officer who brought my dispatches informed me that similar instructions had been given to the captain of a brig and two schooners, but it seems we have one more than I expected."

"Permit me, Captain Stanwood, to request that you show the hospitality of the ship to your comrades in arms."

"The truth is, Captain Paul, I happened to fit out the larder and sideboard of the brig for my own comfort, and our modest friend here seems to be afraid to ask you all as guests, but I will do so, and beg that you hail the different craft for your captains to come on board."

The manner of Lord Erskine showed that he meant all that he said, so that Captain Paul at Stanwood's request hailed:

"Ho! the brig Racer, ahoy!"

"Ahoy the British brig Sea Shadower," came the response.

"I am Captain Paul of the armed clipper Iron Wing, and for Captain Stanwood of this brig, ask your presence on board."

"Ay, ay, sir."

Then the schooner Brimstone was hailed with nearly the same conversation following; next the Spray's captain being called aboard.

Captain Paul then called out, as the fourth vessel unknown by name to him:

"Ahoy, the schooner!"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"What schooner is that?"

"The American privateer Spitfire, Captain Nathan Dale, out on a hunt for the craft that had Captain Noel Stanwood on board as a prisoner."

"Ay, ay, sir, you are cruising in a good cause, so Captain Noel Stanwood requests you to come on board the brig."

"Ay, ay, sir, at once."

As the different captains boarded the brig, they were met by Captain Paul, who then led them to the cabin where Noel Stanwood had gone and presented them to him, after which he introduced Lord Erskine, Lieutenant Bonair and his first officer, Jack Ross.

"Gentlemen, I have asked Lord Erskine Enders, and Lieutenant Brainard Bonair of the British Navy to remain and meet you, also as witnesses that my statement of the case to you is a correct one."

"I may say that I regret putting you to so much trouble to attempt my rescue, and then forestalling you in it, but that is the fault of my splendid crew, for they took the ship and then placed me in command, when I was forced to put Captain Caldwell in my unfortunate situation as a prisoner."

Then, modestly, rapidly and clearly, Noel Stanwood told his story, and the five American commanders heard all with amazement and pleasure, and Captain Dale came very near giving away the part played in the intended rescue by Ethel and Pearl, but was checked by a touch and a warning look from Jack Ross.

"The truth is, gentlemen, I was just fitting out for sea, when I learned about the sentence of Captain Stanwood, and was told that he was to be taken out to England in this brig, and other American vessels were going to try and entrap the craft and rescue him. I saw the schooner Spray here, and her captain told me his orders, so I joined

forces and have become one of the capturing force."

Refreshments were then served, and Lord Erskine told his story of Noel Stanwood's adventures, from his joining the brig on the coast of Peru and saving them from the pirates, up to that night's adventure, adding:

"I am an Englishman, gentlemen, a king's officer, and I intend to do my best for my country, but I am free to confess that I believe that you Americans will gain your independence. May I ask you to drink the health of Captain Noel Stanwood, a man true as steel to friend or foe?"

The toast was drank with a bumper, and Captain John Paul proposed the health of Lord Erskine and Lieutenant Bonair, and added:

"I am glad, gentlemen, that you have fallen into such safe hands and good company as Captain Noel Stanwood, for whom I predict a glorious career."

After some further conversation the five captains took their leave, for the wind was rising and the clouds were threatening now to break in storm, and as the Sea Shadower moved away once more in her interrupted course, the Iron Wing led off with a cheer from her crew and thirteen guns in honor of Noel Stanwood, the Racer followed suit, then the Brimstone and the Spray, and last the Spitfire, when the Sea Shadower answered the salutes, burned a blue light and sent up to the peak the new flag of the struggling patriots, a flag which had been presented by the commander of the clipper, who, when on a schooner, had been the very one whose vessel Noel Stanwood had refused to fire on or attack, when carrying the brig to Boston in company with the two prizes.

And as the beautiful vessel, under reefed sails, sprung away on her course across the sea, Noel Stanwood said in a low earnest tone to his faithful friend and lieutenant:

"Now, Jack, we are on a ship that will win us fame and fortune, and strike a blow for our loved land."

"Once I have landed these British officers and men, and the Red Rebel, as I was called in the military court, shall be heard of from sea to sea, from land to land."

And this, from the lips of Noel Stanwood, was no idle threat.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PEARL LEARNS A SECRET.

THE brig had sailed, and Ethel, Pearl and Mr. Stanwood were to be in suspense until they heard the result of the going of the American cruisers after her.

Several days after the departure of the brig the frigate returned from her run to Halifax, with Paul Revere on board, and Pearl went to her home to be with her father.

Of the mysterious disappearance of the butler she said nothing to compromise herself, so that Mr. Revere considered also that the Press Gang had picked up his butler, and discovering him to have been a thief, and a spy upon his household, he considered it a very good riddance.

The papers found in his room from Frank Farley, paying him money and giving him certain written instructions, Pearl had kept for future reference, except one, with no signatures, stating that he was to keep his eye upon Paul Revere and his daughter, which was proof enough of the butler being a spy.

Mr. Revere reported that the frigate, when coming in, off Marblehead, had seen three vessels flying the American flag, a brig and two schooners, seemingly cruising together, but of course they were not foolish enough to venture within range of a broadside of a large vessel.

The day after the arrival of her father he made earnest inquiries after the prisoner, Noel Stanwood and Lord Erskine.

Pearl told him of the sailing of the brig, and more, she said:

"Lord Erskine has promised to me his influence with the king, father, to get a pardon for Noel, and I believe that he will get him set free."

"I think not, for the king will not pardon an American at this time, you may be certain."

"But when will the earl return?"

"The earl?"

"Yes, Lord Erskine is, now, that his father is dead, Earl of Edmondfield, and

possesses about the largest estate in England."

"He deserves it, sir; but as he did not even refer to his greater title, or inheritance, I did not know to whom you referred when you spoke of *the earl*."

"Well, when does he return?"

"He hoped within six months at furthest, and hinted that he intended to fit out a cruiser for his own command."

"Well, he will hardly visit Boston then, I fear?"

"Why, father?"

"That rebel chief Washington will be in the city before then."

"I would not say so to others, my child, but I am sure that the Americans will drive the British to sea, and then there will be an American army here."

"And you, father?"

"My child, I am sordid enough to confess to you that the deep interest I felt in the British cause was, not to lose my vast financial interests here."

"I have committed myself in no manner to the British, save by pecuniary aid now and then, and I am wise enough to see now what I did not at first believe possible, that the Americans would win, and so I remained loyal to the king in one sense of the word."

"But a short while since I began to hedge, so to speak, and when Washington comes into Boston at the head of a victorious army you will find that he is my friend."

"Ah, father!" and Pearl felt her face flush guiltily, while she was also glad to know that her father was leaning toward the patriot cause, though his motive was a selfish one.

"Of course, Pearl, what I say to you I would not to other living soul, for in these days of bitterness I would, if suspected, be no more safe than Noel Stanwood, and every dollar we have would go, and it is my desire to make you heiress to a very large fortune one of these days, which must be matched by the man who asks you to be his wife."

"You seem to forget, father, that I am pledged to Noel Stanwood."

"His imprisonment cancels that engagement of romance between you two."

"But I have an idea that he will not remain long a prisoner, and if the Americans hold Boston, then he can return."

"Well, wait until he does return; but he will never escape from the depths of an English prison, mark my words on it," and the words of Paul Revere went deep into the heart of his daughter.

That afternoon Pearl went over to the Stanwood cottage.

She saw a carriage there, which she knew to belong to Frank Farley, and neither Mrs. Stanwood or Lucy were visible, but Ethel was in the parlor, and had just entered the room, from what Paul overheard.

She did not mean to eavesdrop, she yet meant to protect Ethel from a man who she now knew had the blackests of hearts.

She would not make her presence known, but she would keep near in case she was needed by Ethel.

When Ethel entered the room, she heard Frank Farley say:

"I suppose you are sorry to see me, Ethel?"

"I cannot say that it is a pleasure, sir, and I am surprised that you should again cross the threshold of my home."

"Well, I come for a purpose, and I will soon make it known."

"Do you not congratulate me upon being again able to be out?"

"I am not so wicked, sir, as to wish to see even you suffer, Mr. Farley, and I certainly am glad that you did not die of your wound."

"My wound was near proving fatal, curses upon that devil, Enders."

"I believed that he tried to kill me."

"No, or he would have been successful, for he is a deadly foe to meet, Mr. Farley, and you brought the duel upon yourself, I have heard."

"Ah! he has told you."

"No, Lord Erskine did not refer to the affair, and you forget that Mr. Revere, Lieutenant Brainard, Commodore Tate and others were present whom I know, and they all agree that you forced the quarrel and met more than your match."

"Not so, not so, but he tried to kill me, to

prevent my appearing against your brother Noel at his trial."

"He did prevent it, did accomplish that purpose without having your life upon his hands."

"Yes, and my testimony would have hanged your brother."

"I do not doubt but that you so desired, and knowing this Lord Erskine, not wishing *false testimony* introduced, decided to prevent it, and when your name was called, your surgeon had to appear for you."

There was a quiet enjoyment in hitting the merchant hard raps, and Ethel was determined not to spare him.

"Well, I did intend to have Noel sentenced, for a purpose, and then I intended to have him pardoned, *on conditions*."

"And your conditions, sir?"

"They are open now to be accepted, for it is in my power to get for him a king's pardon."

"For certain services rendered the king, and his forces here in America, I received an autograph letter from his Majesty, and it tells me that any favor I ask shall be granted."

"Now I am of the same mind now that I have ever been, that you are to be my wife, Ethel, and if you will do as I ask, I will make you a solemn pledge and carry it out at once."

"And what is it you ask, sir?"

"That you give me your written pledge to become my wife on my carrying out certain conditions."

"And those conditions?"

"That I fit out a craft and sail at once for England, obtain the king's pardon for your brother, and have him bring me back to America, when he can take the vessel as his own, and upon a letter from him that I have kept my promise, that you fulfill your pledge and become my wife."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE MERCHANT'S THREAT.

"WELL, Mr. Farley, I only have to say to your proposal, that I refuse it decidedly, and more, that as for the conditions, I would rather die than become your wife."

"By Heaven, girl, you shall rue this," cried the maddened man.

"If you could make me do so I feel that I would; but, you are powerless either to harm my brother, or to injure me."

"Time was when I listened to your pleading for me to marry you to save my brother, and to put my mother back into her old home to gain for her the life of luxury she had always known."

"But I did not intend to sacrifice myself, knowing how cruel would be my fate as your wife. Still, for those I love I can suffer much. But my brother is now under a life sentence and on his way to England, and you can do him no more harm. You have done your worst and he has escaped being hanged as you hoped he would be. So now, Mr. Frank Farley, I wish you to leave my home and never cross its threshold again. Go, sir!"

But the man did not move. He sat lolling back in his chair, gazing at her with a sinister smile.

He was not an ill-looking man, for he was gentlemanly, dressed in great taste and had passed his forty-fifth year, yet looked younger.

It was only when studying his dark eyes and gazing behind the mask of suavity he always wore that one could see his real character.

His face was pale now, and he was thinner than was his wont, from the fact that he had just risen from his bed of suffering, from the wound received in his duel with Lord Erskine just before the trial of Noel Stanwood, and which he now knew was given him by the nobleman to prevent his appearing as a witness against the prisoner.

"Well, Ethel Stanwood, you have had your say, so now listen to me. I am not a man to be cast idly aside, to be despised and insulted even by a beautiful woman such as you are. You say that I can now do your brother no harm. You are mistaken, as I will show you. I will fit out that vessel as I said, sail for England and carry to the king certain evidence of a conspiracy on the part of Noel Stanwood to assassinate his Majesty, that will cause him to order your brother at

once into the hands of the hangman. You know that the king can do this, and if I spend half of my very large fortune I will have your brother hanged. Now I will do more, for I will show that your mother was in this conspiracy, and she will be arrested, thrown into prison and sent to England, also, and be executed."

"Ethel, my dear, I shall sail for England within the month, and if you care to check me you have only to become *my wife*."

"I will leave you now."

"No! no! no! I will accept your—"

"No! never!"

The last speaker was Pearl Revere, and she strode into the room.

In her hand was a rapier which had belonged to Captain Stacey Stanwood, and was much prized by his wife, Ethel and Noel.

It was also kept on a bracket over the mantel in the dining-room, and was a magnificent weapon.

"Pearl! thank God!" cried Ethel, and she sunk into her seat almost overcome.

As for the man, he gnashed an oath between his teeth, and hissed forth.

"May I ask why you thus intrude, Miss Revere?"

Pearl stood just inside of the door, and the rapier had space to swing in her hand.

Somehow it quickly dawned upon Frank Farley that he had heard Pearl spoken of by the officers as a finished swordswoman, her father having taught her the use of weapons from her girlhood.

She certainly handled the weapon now in a manner that looked dangerous, and he concluded he would leave the room and the house, so he said:

"As you have broken in upon my visit to Miss Stanwood, I will take my departure."

"Hold! You shall not leave this room, Frank Farley, until you have heard what I have to say."

"Sit down, sir, or you shall feel this sword-point," and Pearl held the rapier on guard.

The man dared not venture, so said with a sneer:

"I would not be rude to a lady, so what is it that Miss Revere has to say?"

"Just this, sir: that you were once the lover of this lady's mother, and refused by her you became revengeful, but yet did not have the courage to show your hatred, and pretended friendship."

"Captain Stacey, feeling sorry for you, made you his partner, and not a dollar did you ever put into the firm, but, the enormous profits you banked in your own name."

"In truth, in a few years you became master, and when he was lost at sea, you had possession of his fortune and pretended that he was bankrupt."

"You took the elegant home of the Stanwoods from them, and gave them the pittance of a few thousands, leaving them really poor."

"Having failed to win the mother, you strove to marry Ethel, the daughter, and as she despised you, you tried to force her to become your wife by offering to purchase her, with the old home for her mother and a ship for her brother."

"This failing, you tried another threat, and then endeavored to have Noel Stanwood sent to the yard-arm."

"Now you come here with more threats, and in fright this poor girl was about to accept your terms when I decided to face you, and knowing that you are coward enough to attack a woman, I took down this good blade to protect Ethel and myself."

"As for your threats they are harmless, and if you again come to this house, or persecute Mrs. Stanwood and her daughter, I will ask my father to protect them, and you know Frank Farley, that he is a deadly foe if once he turns upon one."

"There is the door, sir, and you have heard my threat—go!"

The man walked around the rapier point to the door.

Then he turned and said:

"Yes, I have heard your threat and you hear mine."

"I shall sail within the month for England. I shall get possession of Noel Stanwood, and if his sister does not become my wife, I swear to Heaven I will hang him to the yard-arm of my vessel, before *her* very eyes."

"Now she knows what to expect."

With this the man left the room, and he was followed by a merry, yet mocking laugh from Pearl, and that rallied Ethel from her condition of terror, for her friend said:

"Barking dogs seldom bite, Ethel, and he is harmless."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

NEWS.

A MONTH passed away, and affairs in Boston town began to look very gloomy for the British.

General Washington was drawing his lines closer and closer, and Lord Howe began to feel that the Americans were besieging him with an earnestness that threatened ultimately to drive him out of Boston, or to capture him and his whole army.

The British soldiers became sullen, and upon short allowance, their tempers were not improved and they treated the citizens with more and more unkindness, in a number of cases with the greatest cruelty.

The wisdom of Frank Farley was evident at this juncture, for he had purchased a prize brought in by an English frigate, under whose guns it had run in a fog, and decided to make a special cruise in her.

The craft was a brig, and she was said to be phenomenally fleet, but Frank Farley added improvements to her, increased her sail, and with his fortune put on board decided to go to sea.

If the English remained the victors, then he would be an Englishman to the core, and loyal to the king.

If the Americans triumphed, then he would naturally go with his own people.

So it was he fitted out this brig, called her the Relentless, and put to sea in her as a privateer.

He was anxious to have a few prizes to swell his fortune still more, and as a British Letter of Marque he could enter London, place his "proofs" before the king, get possession of Noel Stanwood, and then return to keep his threat if Ethel did not accept his terms.

It was a well-laid scheme, and with a fleet, well-armed, formidable vessel, a crew of ninety men, and good officers under him, Frank Farley had become a very dangerous enemy.

The news of his sailing, of course, reached Ethel and Pearl; but they had already seen his vessel put to sea, and noted that she was large enough to be dreaded.

No word had come of the arrival of the brig Sea Shadower in London, nor of the capture of her by the American cruisers, so they were still in suspense as regarded the fate of Noel Stanwood, and this suspense was beginning to tell upon them.

But one day the frigate British King came into port with a schooner in tow.

The schooner was nearly dismantled and badly scarred up, and under the British flag, union down in derision, floated the American flag.

The schooner was the American privateer Spray, which had run in by night into a coast harbor, to discover in the morning the British frigate lying half a mile from her, the crew busy getting out spars ashore.

She attempted to fly, but the frigate gave her a broadside, and the schooner became almost a wreck.

When the commander of the British King came ashore at the club that evening, he had a piece of startling intelligence to make known, to the effect that the captain of his prize informed him that he, with four other vessels, had been lying in wait for the British brig Sea Shadower, and had run her into a triangular trap, from which she could not have escaped; but, upon the brig offering no resistance, they ran down to her and were invited aboard, to discover that she had shipped in Boston a crew of picked men, three-fourths of whom had been Americans.

These had seized the brig, placed the prisoner, Noel Stanwood, in command, and hoisting the "Rebel" flag had gone on a cruise, or a piratical expedition, the captain of the British frigate could only guess which.

What the captain of the schooner, Spray, had told him about Noel Stanwood's treat-

ment of the officers he seemed to forget, as he said that Captain Caldwell had been placed in irons, and doubtless the rest of the officers, while the American would doubtless vent his spite upon the brig's commander, as he had been known to be his foe.

With this startling news to tell, Paul Revere went home earlier than was his wont from the club, and Pearl heard it from her father's lips.

She could scarcely sleep that night for joy, and after breakfast hastened over to the Stanwood cottage, bursting into the room where Mrs. Stanwood sat with her face radiant, while she cried:

"Oh, Ethel! oh, Mrs. Stanwood! Noel is free!"

Then, as soon as she could collect her breath she told the news, and after a long talk together it was decided that Mrs. Stanwood should go down to the military prison and endeavor to see the captain of the American privateer, Spray.

The girls anxiously awaited her return, and the moment that they saw her face they knew that she had been successful.

She had been refused by the commandant, but Prince Paul Revere coming along had, through his influence gained her access, providing a guard should be present.

The captain had greeted her pleasantly, said the fortunes of war were against him, but that in a small schooner surrendering to a frigate there was no dishonor.

He had run into the little harbor for new spars, and had found the frigate there, piloted in by some traitor American.

Then he told of orders received from General Washington, to go in search of the Sea Shadower, and what had followed, meeting the American privateer, Spitfire, Captain Dale, and the boarding of the brig, and meeting Captain Noel Stanwood, Lord Erskine, and Lieutenant Bonair, as also the newly-appointed officers of the brig under her new flag, Jack Ross and Dick Norcross.

Just why Captain Caldwell had been placed in irons he made known, and also that it was Captain Stanwood's intention to land the British officers and men somewhere upon the English Coast, after which he would cruise as an American privateer.

With this news the three were delighted, and yet there was a shadow upon their joy, for they knew that if Noel Stanwood was captured by a British vessel he would be hanged.

And more, he was daily in danger of death upon the high seas, and then Frank Farley in a large brig, well armed and manned, had gone to sea and might catch Noel with his diminished crew.

Still, he was for the present free, and that was a cause of thanks, though as yet no news had come of the arrival of Lord Erskine in England, with the others of the brig who had been officers and seamen of the king.

And there had been ample time to hear, even had the brig been a slow vessel.

So it was that the news spread over the town, the Americans rejoicing, the English rulers in a rage, and the commander of the British forces branded Noel Stanwood in a "Special Order," as "The escaped convict and Red Rebel of the Revolution."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A TIMELY WARNING.

THE storm which had been threatening, burst upon the brig Sea Shadower and sent her flying on her course across the ocean.

Lord Erskine and Lieutenant Bonair, with several of the middies, approached Noel Stanwood, and the former spoke for all and said:

"Captain Stanwood, we are anxious to help you out, until you get your officers appointed and crew organized, and will do regular watch duty on the brig on the run over, only asking to be relieved if you should attack a king's ship, should you meet one in your run across."

"We do this as in duty bound for the kindness shown us, and also for the safety of the vessel, knowing that with but two officers to aid you you cannot do yourself or your vessel justice."

"We await your answer, sir."

"And shall have it at once, Lord Erskine, for I accept with thanks the generous offer of yourself and friends, and feel that my officers will be glad to yield place to yourself and Lieutenant Bonair as seniors, as it will be the better instruct them in their duties."

"Gentlemen, please hold yourselves ready for duty, and in return permit me to say that I will not raise the American colors over the brig until you are safely landed in England, nor will I engage in any action, or capture any prize while you are my guests aboard."

"We certainly could not ask so much, and you are most generous, sir, and we thank you," and with this Lord Erskine, Lieutenant Bonair and four middies reported for duty, both Jack Ross and Nick Norcross gladly yielding them precedence under the circumstances.

Through the night the storm raged, but it had swept around and was favorable to the brig, and she went flying along on her course.

When the sun rose the next morning no colors went up to the peak of the brig, and the men made no comment, for they understood the situation perfectly.

In the cabin were Lord Erskine, Lieutenant Bonair and Stanwood, and the latter said:

"It is not my wish to be harsh to Captain Caldwell, gentlemen, and Lieutenant Bonair, as Lord Erskine's relations with him are strained, I beg you to go to him and say that if he will give his parole to make no trouble, I will be glad to drop the past and entertain him as my guest."

This message Bonair bore to the captain. He found him in an ugly mood, chafing under his irons, and refusing to taste the food placed before him.

"Well, sir, you have come to show me that if I was not true to my king, I could also enjoy the freedom of this pirate ship," he said, savagely.

"Captain Caldwell, I never insult a prisoner, nor strike a man when he is down, so I make reply to you, sir, only that you having lost your ship are no longer my commander, so I beg you to be more choice in your language, as you would not dare, under other circumstances, all things being equal, to cast the reflection that I was disloyal to my king, because I, not like you, are not in irons."

"But I came not to quarrel, sir, but to bear a message."

"From whom?"

"Captain Noel Stanwood, sir."

"Captain? You mean Mister Stanwood, or Sailor Noel Stanwood?"

"No, sir, I mean just what I say, Captain Noel Stanwood sends you a message."

"Well, what says the pirate chief?"

"That he has no desire to be harsh with you, and, if you will give your parole to cause no trouble on board the ship he will be glad to free you and ask you to accept a berth in the cabin as his guest."

"He is kind, in my own ship! but I refuse, sir, I refuse, and so tell the devilish pirate."

"Ah! you prefer to be a martyr, to tell your king how much you suffered for love of him; but, Captain Caldwell, I fear you will not find officers or men who will uphold your course. For your sake I am sorry you will not be reasonable, and I bid you good-morning."

The irate officer gnashed his teeth with fury as the lieutenant left, and instantly regretted that he had not yielded, for the irons were galling to him.

"No, I will stand it; and my king will appreciate my sufferings, while I can make out a case against Erskine Enders, Bonair and any officer who has accepted favors from this pirate Stanwood."

Such was his determination.

But when Lieutenant Bonair returned and reported the result of his visit, Lord Erskine said with sarcasm:

"He is playing the martyr to hurt the rest of us."

"Then his martyrdom ends at once," was the stern reply of Noel Stanwood, and he called for Jack Ross.

"Mr. Ross, I wish you to go and release Captain Caldwell from his irons. Say to him that there is a state-room in the cabin, another in the ward-room, and a hammock in the steerage at his service, so to take his

choice, but that I shall be more pleased if he will come into the cabin. Tell him that I demand no parole from him, unless he desires to give it of his own free will; but that if he causes trouble with his brother officers, my officers or any of the crew of this ship, or insults me or one of my officers on duty, that I shall hang him to the yard-arm five minutes after he is guilty of the offense."

"By the Lord Harry, but Captain Stanwood is in deadly earnest this time," said Jack Ross to his friend Dick, who was officer of the deck.

Then he went upon his errand.

Captain Caldwell scowled at him as he entered his confined quarters; but Jack Ross was not the man to mind that, so took a seat and drew the keys of the irons from his pocket.

"What do you mean to do, Sir Mutineer?" savagely said the British officer.

"Captain Caldwell, I bear to you a message from Captain Stanwood, with an order from him to take off your irons."

"I care to receive no message from him, and I ask not to be set free."

Without heeding this interruption, Officer Ross continued:

"Captain Stanwood told me to say to you that there are three quarters at your service, in the cabin, where he would be most glad to have you come, in the ward-room, or a hammock in the steerage, at your own will."

"Whichever you are pleased to accept, will please him; but should you, now that I have unlocked your irons, insult any officer of this ship, seek a quarrel with any of your brother officers, or create any trouble among the men, he will hang you to the brig's yard-arm five minutes after such offense is committed."

"You are free, sir, and if you will permit me to say so, I beg to tell you that Noel Stanwood, as you should know, is not a man to trifle with, or make an idle threat."

With this Jack Ross walked away, and ordered the marine on guard to no longer hold watch over the British captain.

Caspar Caldwell stood in silence a moment, and then, as though having made up his mind to his course, he smiled in a sinister, wicked way and walked on deck.

He cared not to be thrown in companionship with Stanwood, Lord Erskine, or Brainard Bonair, so took up his quarters in the ward-room, where officers Ross and Norcross, besides his own comrades, had state-rooms.

And it was with no pleasure that his junior officers accepted the honor done them.

Upon deck he neither looked toward Stanwood, nor spoke to Lord Erskine or Lieutenant Bonair, and yet with all others appeared to be very friendly.

"That fellow means mischief, Bonair," said Lord Erskine one day, referring to Captain Caldwell, whom he had noticed to be growing very familiar with the junior officers of the brig when under his command.

"I have observed his actions, my lord, and agree with you."

"You had better have one of the officers warn him, for Stanwood meant all that he said."

"Yes, and Stanwood knows every act of his, though Caldwell is blind enough not to see it."

"I will get Percy to give him a hint, and also will I hint to those young fools that they are toying with the end of a rope," and Lieutenant Bonair went off in search of Junior Lieutenant Percy.

CHAPTER XL.

A DUEL AT SEA.

Noel Stanwood knew that Captain Caspar Caldwell meant trouble, he did not show it by any act or word.

He had the crew show the respect to the British captain, due his rank, whenever they met him on deck, and he would also salute him, though in silence, when they passed each other.

The brig was making good progress, and Lord Erskine had selected a place on the coast of the English channel as the best place to land them all, and in this selection he had been guarded, not caring to run the

brig into the midst of a hostile fleet when she should venture into English waters.

Between himself and Stanwood the warmest friendship had sprung up, and he had told the young privateer captain that he loved his sister, and hoped one day to return and claim her hand, but this, of course, was to be held as a secret between them.

He had also given Stanwood warning that he was sure that Caldwell was up to mischief, but the American made no reply and smiled blandly.

True to his promise he had not hoisted the flag of the American States, and he had avoided every vessel met with at sea.

Lord Erskine and the other officers who had volunteered to serve on the brig, did their duties well, and Stanwood had selected a third officer, or lieutenant from among his men, with four junior officers to serve as midshipmen.

The warrant officers had also been appointed, and the very best men selected for the posts.

These were all learning their exact duties, while the crew were drilled daily and the discipline of the vessel became so thorough that Lord Erskine said that it was not excelled on board of a single frigate in the Royal Navy.

One night, when nearing the English Coast, Lieutenant Percy was on duty as officer of the deck, and by a coincidence every officer on watch at the time was an Englishman.

Lord Erskine and Bonair had retired, and Noel Stanwood had also gone into the cabin and was supposed to be asleep.

The men on watch happened also to be the Englishmen who had joined the brig's crew after her seizure by the Americans, and, whether accident or design, it did look as though matters were looking very bad for those in command, should the Britishers on board attempt to seize the vessel.

Soon out of the ward-room came a cloaked form and advancing toward the young lieutenant, asked in a low tone:

"Percy, are you still a fool?"

"No, Captain Caldwell, I am simply just, and true to my pledged word."

"Bah! a parole given under force and of no account."

"Lord Erskine and Lieutenant Bonair do not so consider it, sir."

"They are as great fools as you are. You still refuse, then?"

"I do, sir, and as an officer on duty, unless you refrain from tempting me to dishonor myself, I shall call for Captain Stanwood."

"Do so, for I wish to speak to him—go, and ask him to come on deck."

In surprise the young officer turned, and as he did so a stunning blow was dealt him and he fell to the deck.

At the same time Captain Caldwell called out:

"Ho, British bulldogs! to the deck, for the brig is ours!"

There was a rushing of many feet, cries, oaths, struggling, yet not a shot was fired, as a stream of men poured out of the ward-room, steerage and hatches and Captain Caldwell sprung forward to make fast the companionway.

He started back in alarm as two bayonets met him, and he heard the stern command:

"You are a prisoner, sir!"

He drew his pistol and pulled trigger, but the powder flashed in the pan.*

Then he turned to find Captain Noel Stanwood on deck, and the crew going to quarters.

"My God! I have been betrayed," he groaned.

"No, sir, you have simply been under watch, and the drug you supposed put in the men's food at supper was not dangerous, being salt."

"But the men pretended to be overcome by it, as did my men in ward-room and steerage, and you, with seven brainless fools who hold rank as king's midshipmen, and twenty men who believed that they could seize the ship, after I allowed them to go free, plotted to take her."

"Lieutenant Percy suffered because he was too honorable to join you, and I am glad to see that he was merely stunned."

"Now, Captain Caspar Caldwell, I should

*In those days flintlock firearms only were used.—THE AUTHOR.

carry out my threat and hang you, yes, and every one who joined in your plot; but instead I will put your allies in irons, and you, sir, I will give a chance for your life, for I challenge you to a mortal combat on this deck."

"You have boasted that had you been my adversary instead of Lieutenant Brule, you would have killed me, and you pride yourself upon your skill with the sword."

"Take your own weapon, sir, and by the battle-lanterns we will settle the quarrel between us," and the Red Rebel faced the British officer with a look that showed the duel should end the life of one of them then and there.

Caspar Caldwell was almost crushed by his failure.

He had believed his success assured, and yet in the moment of seeming triumph he had met with failure.

Officer Jack Ross had played his part well, for the moment that the English crew believed they were masters of the deck, and went below to iron the supposed unconscious Americans, they had been seized, and in an instant found themselves in irons.

So it had been in the ward-room and steerage, and when Lord Erskine and Lieutenant Bonair, all unconscious of trouble until aroused by rushing feet, came on deck, Noel Stanwood was master of the situation and they heard all that he said to the crestfallen Englishman.

"If you mean, sir, that if I kill you I shall receive my vessel back, gladly will I meet you in mortal combat," fairly hissed Caspar Caldwell.

"I did not mean that, sir, but I am not going to be particular about trifles, so will grant it as you wish, so get ready, sir, as I know Lieutenant Bonair will act for you, and Officer Ross for me."

"I am now ready, permit me to add," and the battle-lanterns were brought and placed so as to wholly illumine the brig's quarter-deck.

Captain Caldwell was not long in preparing, and soon faced the Red Rebel, sword in hand.

At a word from Lieutenant Bonair the blades crossed, and the scene was a picturesque and thrilling one in the struggle of the British officer and the Red Rebel for mastery.

If some of the crew had felt anxious, and the mutineer officers hopeful at the compact made by Noel Stanwood with Captain Caldwell, the views of both at once changed, for they saw that the American was playing with the British commander.

In a minute after the sword of the Red Rebel crossed that of the British captain, the latter was disarmed, Stanwood's foot upon the blade and the point of his weapon at the heart of Caspar Caldwell.

"I will not kill you, sir, but you go into irons, and I will so land you upon your native land," and Noel Stanwood turned away, when all expected to see him drive his sword through the Englishman's breast.

In an instant Captain Caldwell was seized and heavily ironed, while Lord Erskine said:

"Stanwood, my noble friend, your patience passeth all understanding, for I would have surely killed him had I been in your place."

"As I would also have done," Lieutenant Bonair added.

Two nights after, the brig landed the party on the English Coast, and, as he had threatened, though he freed the others, Caspar Caldwell was left in heavy irons, and the keys were taken away in the Sea Shadower, when, hoisting the American flag, she set sail as a Rebel Rover of the Revolution.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE RED REBEL'S RED WORK.

WHEN the spring drew near, General Washington began to press his lines closer and closer around Boston.

Provisions had become so scarce that there was absolute suffering, and when at last Washington threw a force upon Dorchester Heights and erected works, Lord Howe had no alternative but to give up trying to defend the place any longer.

Finding that he could not dislodge the Americans from Dorchester Heights, and

that their guns commanded the city, he was driven aboard his ships, and with many families started for Halifax, thus evacuating Boston, and being thereby defeated by General Washington.

News had come in during the first months of the new year of 1776, of the career of a wonderful brig that was preying upon English commerce, and a vessel that arrived bearing paroled prisoners, reported that the craft was known as the Red Rebel, a nickname which the British had given to her captain.

The brig Red Rebel was flying the American flag at her peak, and the private colors of her commander at the fore—a blood-red flag, in the center of which were a pair of broken manacles in black.

It was an odd design for a flag, but it spoke volumes.

The news of the Red Rebel having abroad as a foe to Great Britain reached our home in Boston before it did any other.

A dispatch ship arrived from London, and a letter came thereby addressed to Paul Revere.

Upon breaking the seal Paul Revere discovered a letter inclosed bearing the address:

"MISS ETHEL STANWOOD,

"REFUGE COTTAGE,

"Boston.

"Kind courtesy of

"MISS PEARL REVERE."

This letter was given to Pearl to deliver, and she hastened to the Stanwood cottage with it.

It was Christmas Eve, and better news could not have been received, to relieve the suspense of Mrs. Stanwood and the two young girls.

It was from Lord Erskine Enders, Earl of Edmondfield, and it was very interesting reading.

The letter began by giving the story of the seizure of the brig by its American crew, the appointment of Noel Stanwood captain, and all that followed.

It was one theme of praise to the gallant young sailor, and ended by hoping to be in America before very long and once more in the king's service, while it said:

"When we were landed that night upon British soil, true to his threat, Captain Stanwood left Caldwell in irons, and carried the keys with him.

"It was two days before we could get him freed from them, and when I reached London I placed the entire facts before the king.

"But though all kindness to me the king was in a rage with your brother, and saw Caldwell's course as right, and looked upon him as a martyr.

"The trouble was, news brought in my dispatches proved to his Majesty that he would not be able to hold Boston much longer, and that his Colonies were in great danger of being lost to him.

"Then too the loss of the brig was a heavy one, as the king had built his hopes upon the Sea Shadower being able to run down the lost Silver Ship, and thus solving that mystery of the sea.

"Since then, however, word has been received that a boat was picked up bearing the name of the Wind Witch, and with two dead bodies in it, and a half-written statement that the Silver Ship had gone down at sea.

"Still, other vessels have since reported that the Shadow Silver Ship is still afloat.

"I am fitting out a vessel to take command of, and may be, as she is very fleet, I may be able to run down this remarkable ocean mystery.

"Now to your brother's cruise since he landed us upon the coast by night.

"His Government certainly must be greatly gratified at the splendid record he is making, for he has the whole English coast in an uproar, and between his brig and the frigate of John Paul Jones, Englishmen pass some very wakeful nights.

"It is asserted upon good authority that the Red Rebel, as your brother and his vessel both are known, has taken scores of prizes, fought several sea combats successfully, and retaliated upon the British by landing upon our coast and giving us a taste of fire and sword as some of our cruel naval officers did on the American shores.

"I only hope that his career will not meet an end to be deplored, but then, my friend, Noel is amply able to take care of himself and his ship.

"You may expect to hear of me in Boston Harbor soon, in command of my brig-of-war, which the king named for me the Bulldog, when I had intended she should bear the name of my queen, and you may guess who she is.

"I also will give you a piece of news just received, that the king was moved by Captain Caldwell's entreaties and promises, and sends him to sea to-morrow as a full-fledged captain, and in command also of a brig of large tonnage and well armed and manned.

"She is altered from a noted merchant racing ship, and if Caldwell cannot make a name on her he cannot on any craft; but I would warn him to steer clear of the Red Rebel, in spite of his far greater strength.

"Let me tell you, also, that your old enemy, Frank Farley has been here.

"He came in truly a very fine vessel, and fitted out at his own expense, and bringing in several prizes for the king, he was made a captain in the Royal Navy.

"His rage at discovering your brother's escape nearly threw him into a fever, but he has promised his Majesty to capture the Red Rebel for him, and those are my instructions, too, from my king; so you see Noel will have three of us especially after him, not to speak of those who will always be anxious to haul down the Red Rebel's colors.

"If he is to be taken, I rather hope the honor will fall to me, for various reasons which, if you cannot guess, ask our sweet friend, Miss Pearl Revere, to guess for you."

Such was the letter which Ethel Stanwood received upon Christmas eve, and she could not but admit it was the best "Christmas gift" she had ever received.

Mrs. Stanwood wept tears of joy over it, and Pearl clapped her little hands with delight at the fame the Red Rebel, her lover, was making for himself.

Soon after news began to arrive from abroad, and it became very evident that the Red Rebel was spreading terror along the whole English Coast.

It was known that the Bulldog brig-of-war, under command of Captain Erskine Enders, Earl of Edmondfield, had sailed in search of the Red Rebel.

It was also known that the king had made Frank Farley a captain in the Royal Navy, and sent him after the Red Rebel.

Then it became known that Captain Caspar Caldwell was in command of a fleet, splendidly-armed vessel, and had the one aim in view, the capture and hanging of the Red Rebel.

And yet March came and Lord Howe was evacuating Boston, but no report had yet been received of the capture of Noel Stanwood and his vessel, though rumors were rife of the damage he was doing to British commerce.

And also it became known that the strange, weird craft, the Shadow Silver Ship, had not been lost, for once more had she appeared in the offing off Boston, in broad daylight, to sail away seaward, distancing every craft sent in chase of her.

CHAPTER XLII.

SHADOWED TO PORT.

LORD HOWE was permitted by Washington to sail from Boston, with his soldiers, his navy, and the sympathizers of the king.

The fleet moved out of Boston Bay majestically, and as the prows were turned to the northeast a white sail appeared, coming out of an inlet down toward Cape Cod.

The vessel was a brig, and armed, and at the peak fluttered the flag of the infant nation, and at the fore a blood-red flag with a pair of broken manacles in black in it.

The brig sailed along in majestic style, and unheeding the frigate consort in the rear of the fleet of merchant craft, swept by and sent a shot at the outpost guards of the squadron.

She dipped her flag toward Boston, fired a salute of thirteen guns, and then ran close in toward a British sloop-of-war and sent a shot from a large pivot-gun mounted forward, crashing into the enemy's decks.

The guard-vessels turned upon her, but she was too fleet for them, and her long range pivot inflicted damage where she escaped their fire.

So it went on through the night, the daring vessel haunting the enemy, shadowing them as it were, her great speed enabling her to sail at will around the fleet, which could not but go at a slow pace, with its numerous vessels.

That those on the fleet might be at no loss as to who their foe was, the signals ran up from the brig, until all gazing upon her read:

"THE RED REBEL."

The fleetest vessels of the squadron were dispatched after the daring cruiser, and yet with no other result than to sail for nothing tangible.

And so it went on during the sail to Halifax, the British fleet was shadowed all the way.

Not a vessel that carried women or children or was not armed, was fired upon by the Red Rebel, only those craft that could hit back.

So it went on until at last a brig-of-war, one that had arrived in Boston to meet the

fleet going out, was dispatched by Lord Howe in chase of the American cruiser.

This vessel carried a heavy armament, sailed like the wind, was fully manned, and was known as the "Merciless."

She drove the Red Rebel from the start, which was off Halifax Harbor, and the admiral, seeing her gain upon the fleet American, though slowly, regretted that he had not sent the Merciless at once in chase of her.

The night was coming on as the two dropped the land from sight, and the Merciless was steadily gaining, though the American appeared to be sailing her very best.

Slowly the British vessel gained, until a couple of hours after dark she was in range and opened fire with her bow pivot.

The American replied, but his shot fell short, and it was another hour before his guns reached the Englishman.

But the British craft had done the Red Rebel no damage, until at last a shot struck her decks.

As if by magic, she turned and lay upon the waters.

The British were wild with joy, for the shot must have done terrible damage.

She fired several more shots, and bore down to board.

But suddenly a red light was burned upon the American, illumining his decks like day, and her men were seen stripped to the waist, and at their guns.

And more, she was now under fighting sails, began to move through the waters, and sent a broadside, a raking fire, upon the Merciless.

Every gun seemed to have been aimed by a dead shot, for two guns were dismounted, the bulwarks gashed terribly, a topmast shot away, and a dozen men lay dead upon the decks of the Briton.

Quickly the American bore down upon the Englishman, pouring in a terrible fire, and the effect was appalling.

Nearer and nearer she came, until the roar of the guns of the two combatants were awful, and heard by the distant fleet at anchor in Halifax, all felt that at last the Red Rebel was to be taken.

Nearer and nearer came the Red Rebel, moving rapidly, avoiding broadsides, and with a fire that was most deadly streaming from the muzzles of her guns.

Nearer and nearer, until at last she was laid alongside of the Englishman, and a tall form, wearing a glistening boarding helmet, leaped upon the decks of the Merciless.

"Boarders, follow me!" had been his cry, and he had been obeyed with such an irresistible rush that he was fairly at the quarter deck before much resistance could be offered.

"Now, Caspar Caldwell, we meet upon what I will call, for courtesy's sake, equal terms.—Have at you, sir!"

The speaker was the man in the glistening helmet, and as he spoke he crossed the cutlass of Captain Caldwell with his own.

But the terms were not equal, for the Merciless was the larger ship, carried four guns and fifty more men, and Captain Caldwell was not a match for Noel Stanwood, the Red Rebel, who cut him to the deck with a mighty blow of his cutlass, and then with his own hands hauled down the colors of Great Britain.

"Thank Heaven the brig is not much hurt, and they fired at random, so my brave men escaped.

"But get on the prize, Jack, and follow, or we will have the whole British fleet upon us.

"Repair as you sail, and if we get separated, Boston is our port."

With these orders, as soon as the prisoners were in irons and a prize crew put on board under Lieutenant Jack Ross, the Red Rebel headed southward, also repairing damages as he sailed.

The two vessels lost sight of each other in a storm the next night, and the Merciless arrived in Boston to spread the fame of the Red Rebel.

The next night flashes like the firing of guns were seen far out upon the sea, and they grew brighter and brighter, and more rapid each moment until at last it could be seen by the watchers, and they were many, that two vessels were engaged in the fiercest of combat.

For more than an hour the fight raged, the vessels coming nearer and nearer together, until at last the flashes of the guns seemed to be commingled.

Then the distant roar ceased, and the red flashes were seen no more, darkness hiding all from view.

And anxious hearts were in Boston that night, for it was reported that one of the combatants was the Red Rebel, seen lying in wait near Nahant in the afternoon for some foe.

And after her action with the Merciless, and with her crew lessened by those sent on the prize under Jack Ross, it was feared that the Red Rebel had more than met his match.

But at last the darkness lifted from the sea, the sun rose clear, and coming up the bay were seen two vessels.

One was the Red Rebel and she was in the van.

The other was an unknown craft, larger than the brig, and her British ensign was beneath the Stars and Stripes.

Both the vessels showed that they had been in a fierce combat, and the Britisher looked as though he had been badly worsted.

As they were saluted by the Castle the Red Rebel signaled his name, and also:

"Have as prize British brig-of-war Relentless, Captain Frank Farley, who is mortally wounded."

An hour after the anchors were let fall, and Captain Noel Stanwood went to headquarters and reported his capture of the Merciless, and the death of Captain Casper Caldwell, and the capture of the Relentless and mortally wounding of her captain, Frank Farley, formerly a Boston merchant.

From there he went to the cottage on the hill, and the welcome that he received, I leave for the kind reader to imagine, for my pen is incapable of doing a description of the meeting justice.

After spending some time with his mother and sister, Noel Stanwood wended his way to the Revere Mansion, where he knew that some one awaited to greet and honor him.

He had been already told by Ethel that Prince Paul Revere was an honored friend of the American commander, having in reality never been loyal to the king, but apparently so, and in correspondence with the patriot leaders all the while.

But, though this was the belief, Ethel hinted that Paul Revere had switched over to the Americans when he saw that in clinging to the British he was going down with a sinking ship.

Noel Stanwood was perfectly willing, however, to give Paul Revere's loyalty the benefit of the doubt, for his sweet daughter's sake.

He was met at the parlor door by Pearl, and here too the curtain must be lowered to shut out the scene of joy.

At last the lovers were broken in upon by the arrival of Paul Revere.

He greeted the now famous Rebel Rover quietly, but with no enthusiasm.

But Noel was not to be rebuffed, and boldly told Mr. Revere of his deep love for his daughter, and that she had promised to become his wife at an early day, with her father's consent!

Then did Paul Revere turn upon the young sailor, and his answer came in these words:

"Captain Noel Stanwood, you ask for my consent for you to claim my daughter as your wife.

"I shall give it, sir, only when you return to Boston with the Shadow Silver Ship as your prize.

"Now, sir, you have my answer, so if you love her, go and win her hand!"

"To win such a prize, sir, I would struggle against the impossible, sir, and I go to know my fate," and with a farewell to Pearl, who was in tears, the Red Rebel left the mansion.

Ten days after, and without seeing Pearl again, he set sail.

The Red Rebel had gone to capture the Silver Ship—a Shadow of the Sea!

CHAPTER XLIII.

A CRIME ATONED.

WITH American prisoners found on board the two prizes, Merciless and Relentless, the Red Rebel was manned with her full complement, and no craft ever sailed from port better fitted for a desperate cruise than did the vessel over whose destinies Noel Stanwood held sway.

Ignoring all efforts to make a hero of him, the young sailor had gone on board his vessel and devoted himself to work, and so it was that ten days after the alternative given him by Paul Revere, he sailed from Boston Bay in search of the Shadow Silver Ship.

People wondered, but said that he had gone to seek greater fame.

His two valuable prizes, turned over to the Government, were being fitted out as cruisers, and with the Americans in Boston, an army was there to protect it, and the forts were strengthened to beat off any force that might attempt to attack the town.

A few days after the sailing of the brig Red Rebel, Frank Farley sent for Paul Revere, for he had been told that he could not live.

Paul Revere did not go to see him until a second and more urgent summons came.

Then he passed through the grounds and entered the mansion adjoining his own, which had once been the home of the Stanwoods, and where Frank Farley dwelt, and had been carried upon his coming into port wounded and a prisoner, for the surgeons had said that he could not live.

"You sent for me, Captain Farley?" and Paul Revere seemed strangely nervous.

"Yes; sit close, for I am dying, and we must be alone."

Then he continued:

"I wish to review my past, our past, Paul, for I desire to atone for the evil I have done. You loved the mother of Noel Stanwood, as I did, and together we made a plot to get rid of him. It well might have succeeded, but he escaped death at the hands of the man who was to have killed him, although you paid for the work. He came back just as you were about to steal from him the woman he loved, and who loved him, and you never forgave him. You pretended to, but you never did. As we were both in that crime together, my lips were sealed; but I know that you were the one who prevented me from marrying Ethel Noel, for you got me taken off to sea on a long voyage, by drugging my wine—nay, do not deny it, for I know, and it matters nothing now. But I got my revenge, for the wife you recently married; you know, I was the cause of her leaving you, she and her child. I cared for her for years, while you searched in vain for her, and then married that Cuban heiress, the mother of your daughter Pearl. Your first wife died when your son was twelve years of age, and then, after I had buried her, I sent the boy to sea. That was the last I ever saw of him until he crossed my path as first lieutenant of Noel Stanwood's brig. His name is Jack Ross, and a brave, noble fellow he is. To carry out my revenge, I have arranged for him to know his parentage and that Pearl is his half-sister. And more, I have arranged for Noel Stanwood to know that I did rob his father, that every dollar I have made belongs to the wife, son and daughter of the late Stacey Stanwood, my partner. I am a rich man, Paul, and, excepting this home, all my wealth is in England, and it all goes to Noel Stanwood."

"Now, Paul Revere, when I am dead, all this will be known to Mrs. Stanwood, her son and daughter, your son, Jack Ross Revere, and your daughter Pearl."

"No, no, for God's sake do not say that I plotted the death of Stacey Stanwood to win his wife," and the strong man trembled with fear and anguish of spirit.

"Upon one condition will I hide that which Stacey Stanwood never told even to his wife, that we hired an assassin to kill him."

"Name the condition."

"That you give the hand of your daughter to Noel Stanwood upon his return."

"Yes, yes, I will."

"Swear to it!"

"I do."

"If you break your oath I will haunt you, and in some way I will make the truth known."

"I will keep my oath, so help me God!"

"So be it, and your son?"

"I will gladly acknowledge him now."

"It is well—now I can die in peace when I have seen three others."

"Who are they?"

"Mrs. Stanwood, Ethel and Pearl."

"You would not—"

"No, no, I would only ask them to forgive me."

"I will fetch them at once."

"Do so, for life is fleeting with me."

Two hours after Frank Farley was dead, but he had heard from the lips of Mrs. Stanwood, Ethel and Pearl that his past crimes were forgiven.

And when it became known that he had left his fortune to the Stanwoods, then people knew that he had in reality wronged them bitterly.

CHAPTER XLIV.

A HAVENLESS CRAFT.

THE Red Rebel left Boston with an object in view.

That object was to win further fame by solving the mystery of the Shadow Silver Ship.

Captain Noel Stanwood was a patriot to the very soul; but while looking for prizes he could also search for the mystery which had foiled every one who had attempted its solution.

Lieutenant Jack Ross was his fast friend and adviser, and the two decided that the Shadow must be found.

Poor Dick Norcross had died on the deck of the brig, in the battle with Caldwell's ship, and there were but few of the old crew left, for death had held high carnival upon the deck of the Red Rebel's craft, in the battles she had fought.

But the crew who remained were ready to follow the fortunes of a rising star; they cared not where he might lead.

So with a hundred tried men and true, Stanwood began the most important cruise of his life, to find the Shadow Silver Ship.

What he had at stake in her capture only Jack Ross really knew, and he had said:

"If it were to capture the Devil, Captain Stanwood, I would say for such a prize as Pearl Revere, go in and win, and body, heart, hand and soul I am with you, so now let us find this Specter of the Sea."

The men were as willing for once to drop superstitious dread under such a leader, as was Jack Ross, for Noel Stanwood hid nothing from them as to the purpose of his cruise.

Taking from a book a description of the weird craft, the number of times she had been seen, and just when and where, and also the latitude and longitude where he had picked up the boat of the Wind Witch, with its two corpses and the half-finished statement that the strange vessel had gone down, Stanwood drew his calculations as to the best place to find the specter brig.

He had noted that there was no quill pen or ink-horn in the boat with the two dead men, so how could the statement have been written there?

Then, too, the Shadow Silver Ship had been seen since the finding of that boat.

Putting all things together the captain and his lieutenant decided to sail for southern seas, and, a few weeks after leaving Boston found him in the waters of the West Indies.

Then a calm fell upon the vessel, and for one entire week it lasted.

One morning, at dawn, while the brig was thus becalmed, the lookout at the mast-head shouted out almost wildly:

"Sail ho!"

It brought Stanwood on deck, and then in the gray dawn could be seen a vessel cruising toward them.

Then it put about, as though discovering the breeze and sailed away.

For the brig there was not a breath of air, but, when the day brightened, it was seen that the stranger had a good breeze.

Soon it came to the Red Rebel and she stood away in chase of what all now saw was none other than the Shadow Silver Ship!

She had gained some five miles start of the American brig, and now was a chance to see if she was going to drop the phenomenal sailor of the seas, as she had all other vessels.

If so, she must indeed be a wind witch, or veritable shadow ship.

But, as the wind increased, it could be

seen that the Red Rebel was holding her own at least.

Then, at length, the wind freshened into half a gale and the brig seemed to be slowly, but, oh so slowly, gaining upon the Shadow Craft.

As the wind finally increased to a gale, the Sea Rebel decidedly gained, as all on board could see.

The Shadow Ship seemed also to yaw from her course; and more—she did not stand up to the wind as well as the Red Rebel, which was as stiff as a church steeple.

Then, as not more than two miles divided the two vessels after a chase from dawn until sunset, it was seen that the mysterious craft began to set *more sail!*

As the crew of the Shadow Silver Ship were seen running up aloft the Red Rebel captain cried:

"My God! they are indeed a skeleton crew!"

But, nothing daunted, Stanwood held on in pursuit, and the Red Rebel brig steadily gained now.

Through the night the chase continued, until at dawn the wind had gone down to a five-knot breeze and the sea was smooth.

The Red Rebel had not fired a gun, and would not, for he saw that the Shadow Ship mystery was to be solved without.

He was now only a cable's length astern, and steadily gaining.

Half an hour after he ran alongside, grapples were thrown and he leaped on board, cutlass in hand, followed by Jack Ross and his men.

And such a sight as met their view.

The Shadow Ship was weather worn, her white sails torn in many places, and her rigging broken.

But, her crew?

At the helm stood a man who paid no heed to the boarders, and upon the deck were two-score men, all listless and gazing with no amazement at the Red Rebel's crew.

A man in officer's uniform, paced the deck, a telescope under his arm, and to him Noel Stanwood addressed himself.

"What brig is this?"

"The Havenless Silver Ship, 'Water Witch.'"

"Where from?"

"London, then from the Treasure Island."

"Where bound?"

"Sailing under a curse of the Wizard Priest and Seelah, the witch, to enter no port, never drop anchor, to fly from every flag. You have captured us."

"You have a crew of madmen?"

"Yes, all are mad, I guess; so am I. The buccancer, Belmont, led us to it, and when we reached the island and looked for the treasure of silver, the Wizard and the Witch cursed us. They killed our captain, St. George Maybrick, and they sent us to sea with no officers but Belmont, the Buccancer, and their unrelenting curse. Belmont went mad months ago, and sprung into the sea one night, and I was boatwain, but am captain now. Our men have died of fever, have sprung into the sea, and you see all that remain of us. You have come upon us, so what shall we do now?"

"Yes, I have come to break this accursed spell upon you, to save you, to carry you yes, I to that island and hang the fiendish beings who have thus wronged you. Come, my men; come, lads all; I break the spell of witchcraft upon you; for I found a boat with two of your dead in it, and a statement that the ship had gone down."

"Yes, yes, I did that, to prevent war vessels following us—yes, yes, I believe that you can break the spell of witchcraft upon us," excitedly cried the man.

"I do, I have! lads, you are no longer bound in the fetters of superstition!"

The wildest yells of joy broke from the lips of the crew, and at a signal from Stanwood his own crew gave three rousing cheers and joined in with the poor ragged wretches who had so long fled from their fellowmen.

Then, after a long talk with Noel Stanwood in the cabin, the captain of the Shadow Ship consented to pilot the Red Rebel to the Treasure Island, and ten days after, the two vessels dropped anchor, one quiet afternoon, off the island of the Wizard Priest.

A boat went ashore and the chapel was visited and searched.

Two moldering bodies were found. One was that of the Wizard—one time the Buccaneer Ravel—and the other was she who was once known as Cleo the Beautiful, and later, as Seelah the Sea Witch.

A paper was found near which read:

"After the crime sailed, our boat was lost, so we could not leave the island.

"I killed him to have my revenge, and now die by my own hand.

"If treasure be found on this island, remember it was stained with blood and tears, so do good with it and save thy soul.

"SEELAH, "The Sea Witch."

This was all, and the search for the treasure began.

It was never found, and no one knows where those two hid it after it was taken from the depths of the little pool.

Back to Boston sailed the Red Rebel and his prize, and one morning the good people of the town found at anchor there the brig of Noel Stanwood.

But, the Wind Witch, in bad condition, had been deserted at sea, and had then gone down beneath the waves.

Noel Stanwood, however, had solved the mystery, and he won his prize, the hand of Pearl Revere.

And Jack Ross Revere found a father, and one who intended to atone for the past for his devotion to his son.

So Noel and Pearl were married, and when the war ended Ethel Stanwood welcomed to their home, where she and her mother lived with them, Lord Erskine, and she became the bride of the noble man who, though a foe, had been the truest friend of the Red Rebel of the Revolution.

THE END.

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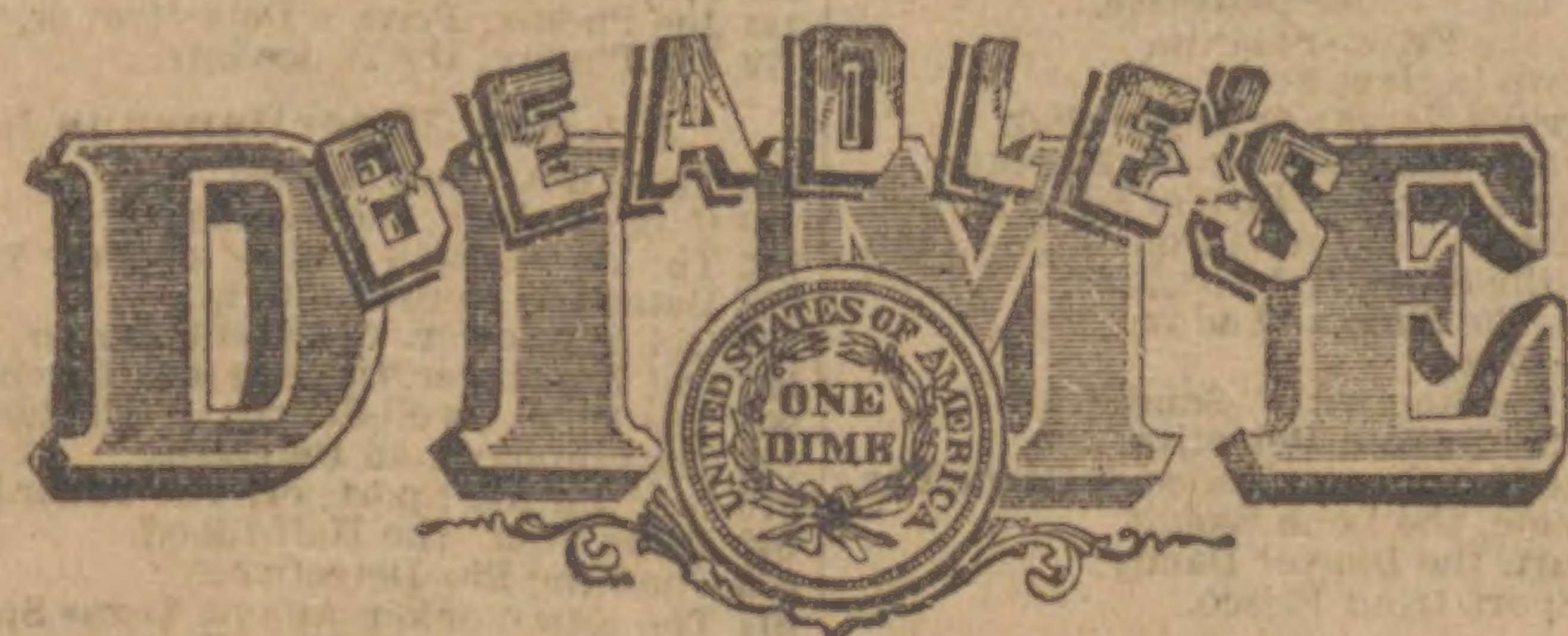


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